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READING, WRITING  
AND REMEMBERING

## WORKS BY E. V. LUCAS

### ESSAYS

SAUNTIER'S REWARDS  
TIMON VERONA  
VIBRILLY GOOD  
USQUE LEAVE  
FRENCH LEAVES  
TRAVELLER'S LURE  
TURNING THINGS OVER  
A ROVER I WOULD BE  
A FRODDY ISLE  
EVENTS AND EMBROIDERIES  
ZIGZAGS IN FRANCE  
ENCOUNTERS AND DIVERSIONS  
LUCK OF THE YEAR  
GIVING AND RECEIVING  
AT THE SIGN OF THE DOVE  
LOTTIER'S HARVEST  
CLOUD AND SILVER  
ONE DAY AND ANOTHER  
FIRESIDE AND SUNSHINE  
CHARACTER AND COMEDY  
OLD LAMPS FOR NEW  
"THE MORE I SEE OF MEN"  
IF DOGS COULD WRITE  
OUT OF A CLEAR SKY  
" . . . AND SUCH SMALL DEER"  
THE DAY OF THE DOG

### ANTHOLOGUES

POET-BAG DIVERSIONS  
THE JOY OF LIFE  
THE OPEN ROAD  
THE FRIENDLY TOWN  
HER INFANTRY VARIETY  
GOOD COMPANY  
THE GENTLEST ART  
THE SECOND POET  
THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE  
DAYS AND ONE MORE

### STORIES

THE BARREL'S CLOCK  
DOWN THE SKY  
WINDMILL'S LOVE  
ADVISORY BEN  
GENEVEVA'S MONEY  
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VERENA IN THE MIST  
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LANDMARKS  
LISTENER'S LURE  
MR. INGLESIDE  
LONDON LAVENDER  
OVER BEMERTON'S

### VERSE

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A WANDERER IN HOLLAND  
A WANDERER IN FLORENCE  
A WANDERER IN ROME  
A WANDERER IN LONDON  
E. V. LUCAS'S LONDON  
LONDON REVISITED  
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN SUSSEX  
ROVING EAST AND ROVING WEST  
INTRODUCING LONDON  
INTRODUCING PARIS

### EDITIONS

THE POCKET EDITION OF THE WORKS  
OF CHARLES LAMB, I, MISCELLANEOUS PROSE; II, FFA, III, CHILDREN'S BOOKS, IV, POEMS AND PLAYS, V AND VI, LETTERS

### BIOGRAPHY AND ART CRITICISM

THE LIFE OF CHARLES LAMB  
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THE COVINS AND THEIR FRIENDS  
JOHN CONSTABLE, THE PAINTER  
A WANDERER AMONG PICTURES  
THE HAMLEDON MEN  
VERMILION THE MAGICAL



# READING, WRITING AND REMEMBERING

A LITERARY RECORD

BY

E. V. LUCAS

He who cannot look forward with comfort must  
find what comfort he can in looking backward

*W. Cowper*

The better part of annals is digression.

*Falstaff adapted.*

WITH 31 PLATES AND 50 ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT



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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

## DEDICATION

TO

\* \* \*

My old editor, F. C. Burnand, to whom a pun offered irresistible attractions, said that the books which men wrote about themselves fell into two categories, autobiography and ought-not-to-be-ography. I don't know yet to which of these groups the present work belongs—no doubt, if to the second, I shall be told—but, in any case, it belongs to you.

E. V. L.





## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1932

WHY, at the age of sixty-three, I should be embarking upon this voyage into the past—and especially since I have always vowed never to do such a thing until I reached three score years and ten, and most improbably then—may be very simply explained. Suddenly stricken down by lumbago and for five weeks unable to move without pain, I had to occupy myself with a form of work practicable among pillows. Being too ill to invent, always a matter of great difficulty to me, I found it amusing to remember ; and since the lumbago was making me at least ten years older I was a reminiscencer on my own rigid terms.

As this is only a record of a writing career, I have said little about personal affairs. But I must confess that one of my greatest griefs, which has followed me all my life, has been to have to answer 'No' to the question, 'Are you related to A. P. Lucas?' Latterly I have been similarly piqued in having to deny kinship with St. John Lucas, although in everything but blood we are united. Nor can I ally myself with Margaret Lucas, Duchess of Newcastle, that loyal lady ; or Sir William Lucas of Lucas Lodge ; or with the Hermit Lucas, whom Dickens infuriated by putting into an article ; or with David Lucas, who mezzotinted Constable.

Lucas is a surname said to be found in all European countries, but my branch is English. My paternal grandmother was a Rickman, my maternal grandfather a Drewett and my mother's mother a Pattison : all Quakers and of Quaker stock. My brother Perceval, a genealogist by profession, carried the four lines back a long way, through

ordinary and respectable walks of life, usually farming, brewing or banking. A quiet drab level was in the main kept, but now and then something more distinguished was flung up: such as Thomas Rickman, the architect; Thomas 'Clio' Rickman of Lewes, the reformer and associate of Tom Paine; Samuel Lucas of Hitchin, the brewer-painter; Thomas Hodgkin, the banker-historian; Joseph Lister, afterwards Lord Lister, who put humanity in his debt by the use of antiseptics; Rickman Godlee, the surgeon; A. W. Verrall of Cambridge, the classical scholar; Jeremiah Wiffen, the translator of *Tasso*; and Roger Fry, the artist and critic.

I should like here to say, in so many words, what should be implicit throughout the book: that I cannot be sufficiently grateful for the good fortune that has turned what is too often called the drudgery of writing into a pleasure. For the greater part of my literary life I have been able to choose my own subjects and write nothing that I did not want to write or that I did not believe. Hence I have driven the quill with no less contentment than other men drive trotting ponies or Bugatti cars. Few authors can have been so lucky as I in blending recreation with livelihood.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION, 1933

**I**T would be a great pleasure to me to write this book afresh; but that cannot be. In default of that I may some day add a volume of greater intimacy, where life comes before bookishness.

The text of this edition has been corrected and amplified in various places and the course of the Hand of Death, in the past year, marked.

E. V. L.

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READING, WRITING  
AND REMEMBERING



# READING, WRITING AND REMEMBERING

## CHAPTER I

### FIRST READING

Poor Mary '—The Green Boy Book—Hans Christian Andersen—Jacob Abbott—Ann and Jane Taylor—Sunday Books—' Ballantyne the Brave '—Frank R. Stockton—The Spell of the Eighteenth Century—John Timbs—' Hesba Stretton '—*The World of Wit and Humour*—Simple Poetical Needs—Taste in Fiction—A Literary Censorship—Books with a bedside manner—Ouida—George Eliot—Jane Austen—The Two Ladies—The Irish Idiom—A Recipe for Retirement

**N**OT counting nursery rhymes or hymns, the first piece of literature with which I became acquainted was—as was once the case with so many children—written by Jane Taylor of the Taylor sisters, Ann and Jane ; whose function is now largely in the hands of A. A. Milne. It was a little poem sung to me by my mother, beginning :

' Before the bright sun rises over the hill,  
In the cornfields poor Mary is seen,  
Impatient her little blue apron to fill  
With the few scattered ears she can glean.'

Jane Taylor and her composer were in this poem providing at any rate one reader—no, not reader, listener—with an undercurrent throughout a life that is now in its seventh decade. I am not sure that

' Impatient her little blue apron to fill '

## 2 READING, WRITING AND REMEMBERING

is not still my favourite line in poetry. It is challenged only by

‘ Before the bright sun rises over the hill ’ :

a moment that we all are always waiting for.

‘ Poor Mary ’ belonged to the parlour. Upstairs we were regaled with less tranquil rhymes, for we had a nurse who had by heart the terrifying prophecies of Mother Shipton : a popular seer of the day, less constructive than Old Moore, with what would now be called an annihilation complex.

‘ The world unto an end will come  
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one ’

—that gloomy forecast was among Mother Shipton’s poetical works. Only a few years to go and there would be nothing, nothing ! It was a long time of grace—say seven years, and seven years is an eternity when we are very young—but all the same the threat was frightening and chilling. Let us hurry downstairs, to the comfort and security of the present moment.

To name our ‘ firsts ’, even though it is not too easy, is always easier than to name our ‘ seconds ’. What piece of literature came after ‘ Poor Mary ’ I cannot say ; my mind is divided among many, all again listened to rather than read, for my mother was a constant reader-aloud and we had many poetry books. I can remember much in a range wide enough to comprise Eliza Cook’s ‘ Old Arm-chair ’, ‘ Hiawatha ’, Wordsworth’s ‘ Drink, pretty creature, drink ’, ‘ John Gilpin ’, Southey’s ‘ Lodore ’, and the verses about Old Kaspar and little Wilhelmine, in which it always seemed to me wrong that he should have been so ignorant. The sources of battles surely must have been worth inquiry. There were also several odds and ends of rhymes which have remained in the memory, one of which ran :

‘ The horse bit his master.  
How came it to pass ?  
He heard the good pastor  
Say “ All flesh is grass.” ’

And then there was the rhyme which a want of punctuation turned into magnificent nonsense: 'I saw a peacock'. 'I saw a peacock' it begins:

'I saw a peacock with a fiery tale  
I saw a blazing comet drop down hail  
I saw a cloud wrapped up with ivy round  
I saw an oak tree creep along the ground  
I saw a pismire swallow up a whale  
I saw the sea brimful of nutty ale  
I saw a Venice glass . . . .'

The trick, which it was such a triumph to explain to bewildered contemporaries, was the absence of a full-stop at the peacock. 'I saw a peacock' is a definite statement, unrelated to the rest of the poem. The fiery tale was the comet's; the hail was the cloud's; and so forth.

The very first book I can remember is a comic German picture-book about bad boys; a rival of *Struwwelpeter*, I should guess, but I liked it better. We called it 'The Green Boy Book' because one of the boys was dressed in a green tunic. He and his companion had started a barrel—Dio-*genes'* own tub, in fact—rolling after them down hill, and it caught them up, went over them and left them flat. Really flat, like sheets of paper. I never tired of that tragedy. I rather think 'The Green Boy Book' was the work of Wilhelm Busch, the German artist who was the real inventor of the progressive comic series which it is customary to attribute to Caran d'Ache and which everyone now attempts. 'The Green Boy Book' was seen only when I was visiting my maternal grandmother and was her one vehicle for the beguilement of her grandchildren. It was kept locked up in a cupboard and brought out only as a favour. Its sole companion in that cupboard, from which passages were read every morning after breakfast, in place of the Bible, was a folio Josephus. Strange bedfellows.

'The Green Boy Book' came before I could read and had to be explained. Then came the books to which we listened—which probably are the best of all—and then those that I read to myself, by the thousand.



#### 4 READING, WRITING AND REMEMBERING

Of those to which we listened, let me begin with Hans Andersen, whom I much preferred to Grimm. I have since discovered that the two writers are not to be grouped together, because whereas the Grimms were primarily students of folk-lore, Andersen was a naughty old satirist. None the less—or rather because—Andersen's name should have letters of gold, for he was the most honoured of all. Other writers did their best, and for a while seemed to conquer and sway; but they did not satisfy: sooner or later came cries for 'Big Claus and Little Claus', or 'The Wild Swans', or 'The Travelling Companions', or 'The Brave Tin Soldier', or 'What the old man does is always right', or my own favourites, 'The Nightingale' and 'The Tinder Box'. Nothing of that quality in Grimm. I was very fond too of Ruskin's *King of the Golden River*, a story about three brothers and their adventures. No story about three brothers with different characters can go very far wrong, just as no story can go wrong where a weakling who is bullied takes boxing-lessons. And another book I never tired of hearing was Harriet Martineau's *Young Settlers*. This was about a flood. No story about a flood can go very far wrong. A terrible flood, with haystacks swirling along, and mattresses and babies in cradles rushing down in mid-current.

We also had a whole series of books by an American named Jacob Abbott, called the Franconia Stories, about Phonny and Madeline and Stuyvesant and a wise handy Swiss boy named Beechnut, who could make anything with a pocket-knife and always said, 'Well'. "'Well," said Beechnut'. I wonder if Jacob Abbott as a writer exists to-day. He had a curious quality as a narrator, taking you minutely into his confidence over every particular and making the most trivial details absorbingly interesting.

Then we had, for fun, the 'Alice' books and *Helen's Babies*, and, for terror, the *Original Poems* of Ann and Jane Taylor. I still turn cold when I think of the story of the Little Fisherman who, by way of judgment for having caught a fish, was himself suspended by the throat on a

meat-hook in the larder. Very unfair, but never to be forgotten, even though one continued to angle ; and I still never see an orchard in September, with the apples catching the light, without thinking with a shudder of the ballad of the boys and the mantrap. But the story I liked best was ' Greedy Dick '. There was a splendour, an affluence, a freedom, about the first stanza which filled me with envy :

‘ “ I think I want some pies this morning,”  
Said Richard, stretching himself and yawning.’

These are the opening lines, and they display a voluptuousness which, in our home circle, may frequently have been felt but was rarely expressed and never gratified. ‘ Some ’ pies too ; not one pie. In the next couplet recklessness and licence join the scene :

‘ So down he threw his slate and books  
And sauntered to the pastrycook’s.’

That was a Richard worth being. When he got to the pastrycook’s, he spent all his money in gorging and so had nothing left for a poor beggar.

Many years later, as it happened, I was to edit the completest collection of the verses of the two Taylor sisters and their friend Adelaide O’Keefe that has yet appeared—urged thereto by Swinburne, in a long letter in their praise, which unhappily no longer exists.

Reverting to the frightening influences in the books of those days, there was nothing to equal the horror communicated by Southey’s ballad of Bishop Hatto cornered in his castle by rats. I was not so moved again till Edgar Allan Poe arrived with ‘ The Fall of the House of Usher ’ and ‘ The Cask of Amontillado ’.

We had *Little Women* and *Little Men* read to us, and later came three glorious books which I hope are still in nursery libraries—Marryat’s *Children of the New Forest*, Hawthorne’s *Tanglewood Tales* and Kingsley’s *Heroes*. I used to think, and still do, that Theseus’s forgetfulness about hoisting the right sail after he had killed the minotaur was one of the

saddest things that could possibly happen. Among the other tragedies met with in early reading which still make me shudder, is the mistaken killing of the faithful hound in the ballad 'Beth Gelert' and the fate of the beautiful girl in 'The Mistletoe Bough', where with the saddest story is also the saddest music. But the wretched frustrated Chatterton, in the play which Wilson Barrett used to perform, finding a publisher for his poems and a beloved for his heart the minute after he has swallowed the fatal draught of poison: he was heart-breaking, if you like, even though Wilson Barrett was fat and Little Lord Fauntleroyish and thirty years too old for the part.

Those were week-day books. On Sunday, of course, there were different ones: 'Sunday books' in short. My home being strictly Sabbatarian, we might read—or listen to—only what had a religious bearing, and if we used the paint-box it was to illumine texts, and if we played it had to be what were known as Sunday games. Capping verses from the Bible, for instance. The result was that I then longed for Monday as much as I longed for Sunday after I grew up. For not only were there these restrictions, but Sunday meant services and best clothes too. One of our Sunday books, I remember, was called *Frank: the Story of a Happy Life*. I remember it for two reasons, one being the incorrigible piety of Frank's brief career, as described by his mother—he was, I should guess, a consumptive—and the other that the frontispiece was an actual photograph. This sometimes happened in publishing in those days, but even then—I was six—it seemed wrong. Most of the models held up to us in Sunday books died young. Is that, I wonder, still the case? Or have Sunday books ceased to be?

*The Fairchild Family* was not on our list; indeed I did not open it until many years later, when it had become an accepted object of derision. But we had many stories by a writer who called herself A. L. O. E., and my mother kept at her bedside a volume of religious poems by Frances Ridley Havergal, with the perusal of which she began every

day. There were also *Ministering Children* and *The Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family* and *Little Henry and his Bearer* and *Jessica's First Prayer* and *Little Meg's Children* and *The Wide Wide World* and *Queechy*—all suitable for Sunday. *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *A Peep behind the Scenes*, and *Black Beauty* were, I fancy, on the border-line. *Black Beauty*, the autobiography of a horse, always made me cry. Then there was *The Story of a Short Life*, by Mrs. Ewing—that was pathetic too and therefore suitable to the Day of Gloom.

Just a word about one of the authors mentioned, for it illustrates an interesting subject, the choice of pseudonyms. The real name of Hesba Stretton, who wrote *Jessica's First Prayer*, *Little Meg's Children* and fifty other books, was Sarah Smith, and she was not only a contributor to *All the Year Round* under Dickens, but became a protégée of his. Having come to the decision that Sarah Smith was an undistinguished name, she looked about for another, and just as Dickens had taken 'Boz' from a family mispronunciation of 'Moses', so did she begin at home. Hesba was composed of the initial letters of her five brothers and sisters, in their order of age; Stretton she took from Church Stretton in Shropshire.

All the books that I have already mentioned were read to us. When I could at last read to myself, I found endless solace and refreshment in a book of almost folio size, given to me by my mother as a birthday present, entitled *The World of Wit and Humour*, edited by George Manville Fenn. This provided an introduction to a number of writers who would have to be well explored later—among them Oliver Wendell Holmes ('The Wonderful One-hoss Shay'), Mark Twain, Bret Harte ('The Society upon the Stanislaus' and 'The Heathen Chinee'), Artemus Ward, Charles Godfrey Leland ('Hans Breitmann'), Josh Billings, Charles Dudley Warner, Henry S. Leigh, W. S. Gilbert, the two Tom Hoods, Arthur Sketchley, who had invented a voluble and opinionated British matron named Mrs. Brown, Douglas Jerrold, who had preceded him with Mrs. Caudle,

and George Augustus Sala ('The Conversion of Colonel Quagg').

I must have read these pages with the most complete concentration, for I can still remember two of the small jokes with which its interstices were filled. Just as an indication of the caprice of the memory, which lets so much grain slip and retains so much chaff, I quote one of them now. It accompanied a picture of a young angler being accosted by a long-haired poet. Says the poet, 'Ho, Adolphus, art thou enticing the finny race to engulf in their denticulated jaws a barbed hook to which is affixed a dainty allurement?' And the boy replies, 'No, sir, I'm fishing.' That I thought this pomposity exceedingly funny at the time is proved by the fact that I learned it by heart. Obliquely it may have been a lesson, for it is not impossible that the seed of an aversion from long words and elaborate diction was then sown.

When I could read to myself, my first favourite was R. M. Ballantyne: 'Ballantyne the brave', as Stevenson called him; and then, I think, came Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* and *Westward Ho!* and *Tom Brown's School Days*, which I thought as sadly impaired by the entry of Arthur as *Huckleberry Finn* by the interferences of Tom Sawyer. Captain Mayne Reid was a stand-by, and so was his namesake Talbot Baines Reed, after his arrival in the *Boys' Own Paper* with *The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch*. Had there not been his *Fifth Form at St. Dominic's*, I don't suppose that I, as well as thousands of other boys, would have taken to school journalism. Of course I read *Eric* and *St. Winifred's* by Canon Farrar, but I never believed in them; Talbot Baines Reed was the authentic school-novelist. Somewhere in the back of my mind is the name of Mrs. Eiloart, associated also with acceptable stories of school life early in my independent reading career. One of her books was called *Chris Fairlie's Boyhood*, and it was excellent. There was also a fascinating book called *The Swan and Her Crew*, about boys building their own boat and sailing it on the Norfolk Broads.

All Marryat I devoured. *Mr. Midshipman Easy* I revelled in, and *Peter Simple*. I doubt if they are read by small boys to-day. To-day I fancy that small boys read what has been especially written for them, by the Ballantynes and Hentys and Kingstons and Manville Fenns of the moment, or they read the magazines. Sherlock Holmes and his derivatives were after the time of which I am writing. But I would not give Smedley's *Frank Fairlegh* for all the detective stories ever devised. That was a book I could not put down, followed by *Lewis Arundel* and *Harry Coverdale's Courtship*. There was not only an exciting story in those books; there was life. Billiard saloons, drink, without anything to skip. Charles Lever I devoured too—*Charles O'Malley* and *Harry Lorrequer* and *Tom Burke of Ours*—which were second only to Smedley's.

But how perilous it is to return in maturity to the enchanting pages of our childhood I have just discovered, by the rash act of reading, or trying to read, *Frank Fairlegh* again. And in doing so I made the odd discovery that Ouida, when she wrote her first novel, *Held in Bondage*, went to Smedley for her picture of a private tutor's.

And then there were the Harrison Ainsworths. It was a glorious moment when I discovered Ainsworth. I read them all, some in first editions with Cruikshank's plates. Mauger the headsman sharpening his axe in *The Tower of London*, and Herne the Hunter in a thunderstorm in *Windsor Castle*, I can still see whenever I close my eyes for that delectable purpose. *Oliver Twist* was made more memorable by Cruikshank too. But before I came to Dickens and Thackeray there was a time more glorious even than when, two or three years earlier, Ainsworth had satisfied every need; and this came with *The Three Musketeers*. Ainsworth to Dumas is as water to wine. I know now, and I suspected it then.

I read Lytton—not *My Novel* and *The Caxtons*, but *Rienzi* and *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *Kenelm Chillingly* and *Zanoni*. I read Charles Reade. I read Scott, but not after Dumas. I mean at that time. Afterwards I found

him again, but I am one who prefers his *Journal* to his novels. There is indeed no book that I did not attempt. I could even read Henry Cockton's *Valentine Vox*, although it tried one's credulity rather high. The same author's *Sylvester Sound* beat me, but I got through Samuel Warren's *Ten Thousand a Year*, although always fairly sure that Tittlebat Titmouse was a bad choice of name for the hero. Theodore Hook's *Gilbert Gurney* I found too high-spirited. Cuthbert Bede's *Verdant Green*, however, I remember liking.

Since I have referred to books that I could not read, let me confess here to a blind spot for Surtees. Again and again have I tried to find sustenance or refreshment in Jorrocks & Co., but in vain. On the other hand I can read the horsey pages of Surtees' pet aversion 'Nimrod', whom he called Pomponius Ego, by the hour.

That so many odd books should have been accessible may be a matter of surprise; but I was a great borrower (always punctiliously returning); I spent my pocket-money on sixpenny editions, of which there were in those days very many; and I found in a back street in Hove a cheap circulating library. There was also a shilling Shakespeare, published by Dick: everything complete.

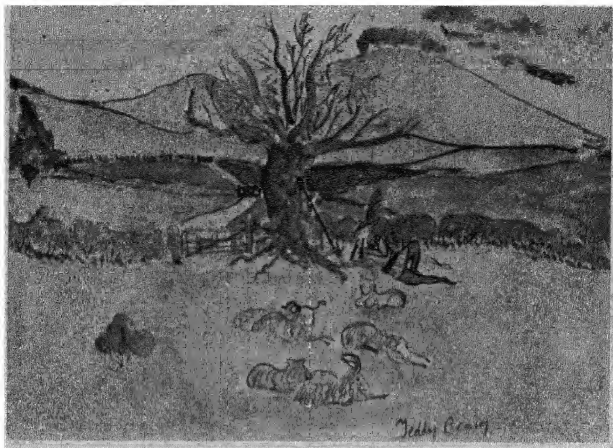
What I never looked at, except in the cricket season, was a newspaper. Like most small boys I knew the initials of every amateur and the Christian names of the professionals, and having seen what they had done yesterday my interest in the outside world evaporated.

When I was about fourteen I was bitten by the Americans and for a while read nothing else. I read all Mark Twain but of course liking *Huckleberry Finn* the best, all Bret Harte, Poe's Tales, *Uncle Remus*. And the more farcical funny men too: Max Adeler, who for a while was my favourite, and Artemus Ward, and *The Danbury Newsman*, and *A Bad Boy's Diary*, and a writer I have never heard of since, named Stanley Huntley, who described the adventures of a Mr. and Mrs. Spoopendyke and seemed to me to have influenced Jerome K. Jerome not a little. Another American author whom I pursued was that curious fantastic



SAMUEL DREWETT





**FANTASTIC LANDSCAPE**

*From a water-colour sketch by E. V. Craig*



**"BUTTON SNAP", CHARLES LAMB'S COTTAGE  
FROM AUGUST 21, 1812, TO FEBRUARY 25, 1815**

*From a water-colour sketch by C. Lovat Fraser*

humorist Frank R. Stockton, beginning with *Rudder Grange* and the volume of short stories containing 'The Lady or the Tiger?'. I had at one time all his books, assembled with no little difficulty; but to-day, such is the power of the borrower, I have not one. He was not for every taste—his processes were too slow and stealthy for readers of, say, Max Adeler or Mark Twain—but I personally wanted more and more and must some day revive the old impressions. His gift of grave absurdity, making impossibility meticulously real, was never employed with more relish on the author's part than in the story called 'The Casting-away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine', which I remember using as a test-piece among my friends to see whether they really could appreciate nonsense or not. I wonder if anyone reads Stockton now. Stevenson, who used 'to rejoice in him', wrote these four lines in his honour:

'My Stockton if I failed to like,  
It were a sheer depravity,  
For I went down with the "Thomas Hyke"  
And up with "Negative Gravity".'

What a lot of authors who were popular in the eighteen eighties, and particularly those that I liked best, seem to be out of print! Does this reflect upon my taste? A disquieting thought.

Mention of Stevenson brings me to *Treasure Island*, which I read directly it was published, in 1882, when I was fourteen. Even more excited was I by the same author's *New Arabian Nights*, published in the same year. But his two books which I most cherished and read again and again were the *Inland Voyage* and the *Travels with a Donkey*, which I still have in pocket editions with a frontispiece by Walter Crane. They were published in 1878 and 1879 respectively, but I cannot say when I first read them. Not until after I had read both Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and Kinglake's *Eothen*, for I can remember thinking them better than either, by which of course I mean more appealing to me.

I also knew, probably long before many English readers—because it was not until Colonel John Hay became American Ambassador to the Court of St. James that his early work was published here—the Pike County Ballads, and at this day I could give a reciter in doubt the next line in ‘Jim Bludso’, ‘Little Breeches’ or ‘The Mystery of Gilgal’. It was very exhilarating, only the other evening, to be matching memories of Hay’s poems with the Master of the King’s Musick, Sir Edward Elgar.

School readers also played their part in forming literary preferences, although probably they are stronger in the other direction. I remember in particular two extracts, one of which I hated and one of which I liked and returned to again and again. Both were by Americans. The piece which I hated was called ‘One Niche the Highest’ and described how the indomitable Elihu Burritt, as a boy, climbed a wall. The other was about English life a century ago and a country gentleman named Master Simon, whom I found afterwards at fuller length in Washington Irving’s *Bracebridge Hall*, which comes half-way between Addison and Steele’s Roger de Coverley papers and the poems of Austin Dobson.

I have mentioned many of the regular accepted books which young readers find for themselves on their parents’ shelves or are told about by their contemporaries. Now and then chance brings something exceptional, such as, in my own experience and very early, a crowded volume of stories of illustrious persons, called *A Century of Anecdote*, by John Timbs. The eminent people were classified—authors, artists, statesmen, doctors, actors—and practically all were of the eighteenth century. It was my first glimpse of that enchanting period, which a series of high lights such as was provided by this carefully selected series of amusing occurrences and witty replies made even more attractive. Very easy reading, too, for no story occupied more than half a page. It was in this book that I first met Garrick and Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith and Reynolds, Foote and

Sheridan, Wilkes, George Selwyn and Charles Lamb. Looking into the *Dictionary of National Biography* I find that Timbs, my benefactor, was born in 1801 and was the author of no fewer than a hundred and fifty books. Among his many compilations, *Things not Generally Known*, 1856, second series, 1859, might be worth reprinting, unless later journalists, who have found him to be a little goldmine, have made it all seem old. In the list given in the *Dictionary the Century of Anecdote* does not appear. Timbs died in 1875, just as I was beginning to read him, in 'considerable poverty'.

I find among my early rhymes, which had a way of being sententious, this effort to record the transition stage between frivolous and more serious reading :

'Youth's thoughts on books are seldom set  
 Upon the noblest, best.  
 His standard is not high, as yet,  
 Nor is his mind impressed  
 With finest thoughts, with grandest deeds ;  
 The most exciting tales he reads.

As time rolls on, with pain he learns  
 His swans were mostly geese,  
 To wider streams he gladly turns,  
 Whose torrents will not cease.  
 'Tis then his mind and taste will thrive ;  
 "When half gods go, the Gods arrive ".

Thinking about it now, the mystery is how I found the time to read so much and keep my eyesight and lead any other kind of life as well. I was shy and retiring, but not unsociable. The call of the open air was stronger than any book.

During the years of which I am thinking—between the ages, say, of eight and fourteen—I read little but prose. Like Aurora Leigh, I did not chance upon the poets until the time was ripe. But I had taken some steps towards Parnassus. We had the regular poetry books at school, of course, and at home Longfellow and Hood and Macaulay's

*Lays*, and the *Bab Ballads* and the *Ingoldsby Legends* (one of which, 'The Execution', I received sixpence from my uncle, Samuel Drewett, to learn by heart). At how early an age I used to hear him repeat Burns's lines that follow, I cannot determine ; but gradually I had them by heart too, long before I ever opened the volume they are in :

' To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,  
Assiduous wait upon her ;  
And gather gear by ev'ry wile  
That's justified by honour ;  
Not for to hide it in a hedge,  
Not for a train attendant ;  
But for the glorious privilege  
Of being independent.'

To gather gear ! He gathered little enough himself, but he was tireless in helping others to that end.

As for the real poets that I read to myself, they came much later, the way to them being paved by Austin Dobson, who for a year or so after I had broken from fiction did all that I wanted in verse until Browning and Matthew Arnold arrived.

Another favourite was William Barnes, of Dorsetshire, for whose simple homely verses I had for a while the deepest admiration. They formed, indeed, the subject of my earliest critical essay.

All the poetry that I now want could be compressed into three volumes, one to consist of Shakespeare, one the first *Golden Treasury*, and the third a miscellany containing much Matthew Arnold, FitzGerald's Omar, most of A. E. Housman, some Browning and a little of Hodgson, of De La Mare, of Edna St. Vincent Millay and of Alice Meynell.

Let me finish this section on early tastes by saying that as a reader to-day, all these years later, I still want books to be cheerful and amusing. Authors may be as satirical and ironical as they please, but directly they become pathological I drop them. This is not because I am afraid

of facts as facts, but because in my opinion the novel is not the place to expose them. Moreover the half-truth is a nuisance, and not even the sternest realist would be allowed to tell all. The result is a carefully selected parade of detail; a compromise between science and fiction, which, to me, who hate compromise, is nauseating. Should a novelist of genius arise and in a passion of sincerity tear away every veil, I might do homage; but he has not been seen yet. Meanwhile, the adroit novelists of talent, calculating the risks and being as candid as they dare, give me, who read for pleasure, no pleasure at all.

But apart from matters of sex, how can a story within the ordinary limits of a seven-and-sixpenny volume tell anything, or hope to tell anything? We live in seconds, every one of them pages long, with unspeakable thoughts playing within us like a weaver's shuttle. No recorder could cope with such seething mobility, even if he had all the paper in the world to write on. Why, then, try? Let the story-teller, in Sir Philip Sidney's words, come unto us 'with a tale, which holdeth children from play, and olde men from the chimney corner.' Or in the words of a living poet, let the story-teller carry 'tired people to the Islands of the Blest'.

All the same, I should not support a censorship, at any rate, in England, not even to protect the minds of the young. Like attracts like far more than it creates like; and therefore the mischief—if it is mischief—has probably been done. To use a word without which no earnest advanced novel is now complete, a reader does not become a 'sadist' through perusal of the monotonous pages of the Marquis de Sade; it is because he is that way inclined that he perseveres. Besides, in England there is always the Press, or Public Opinion, and the Law, to keep things fairly sweet; and being a nation of busy-bodies, with, too many of us, nothing else to do, it is difficult for any lapse from virtue or rectitude or good form, in others, to escape notice. Our old friends 'Paterfamilias', 'Pro Bono Publico' and 'Mens Sana in Corpore Sano' are bound to spot it. Mean-

while the principal national industry, trying it on, will continue to flourish.

I still read new novels, but the books that I like best are biographies, personal reflections and reminiscences. I agree with Pope that the proper study of mankind is man. Boswell and Pepys, *The Citizen of the World*, Hazlitt, Lamb, *Horæ Subsecivæ*, the memoirs of William Hickey, the memoirs of Alexandre Dumas, Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*, Haydon's autobiography, Charles Young's memoirs, and *The Story of San Michele* by Axel Munthe (to name a recent example)—these are the books I like best and can return to: the books with the best bedside manners.

Considering how well treated I had been, in early days as a reader, by Miss Allcott, and Miss Edgeworth, and Miss Martineau, and the Misses Taylor and Mrs. Eiloart, it is odd that suddenly, in the late teens, I should discover that any book with a woman's name on the title-page was unreadable, or rather was not to be attempted at all. A very blind spot. This kept me from much good literature. From Miss Broughton, for example. Also from Ouida, of whom most that I know was derived from short stories by her which a master at one of my many schools read to us when he was bored by the task of imparting knowledge, of which he had so little that we were aware of it. 'A Dog of Flanders', 'A Leaf in the Storm', 'Two little Wooden Shoes'—all these he read, and I suspect with some dramatic skill, for he had most of us in tears.

This absurd and indefensible prejudice against all feminine writers but Marjorie Fleming kept me also, until many years had passed, from George Eliot and Jane Austen. George Eliot, when the time came, I read and admired and occasionally rejoiced in, particularly in the rustic conversations in *Silas Marner*, in Mrs. Poyser, and in the *Scenes of Clerical Life* (probably the best book with the worst title in the world) throughout; but Jane Austen I 'fell for', as we now say, completely, and still idolatrously worship.

I don't know when women writers began to be funny—

after Jane Austen the world had to wait for *Cranford*, that exquisite thing, and after *Cranford* for what? But my first knowledge of them as consistently humorous came with the *Experiences of an Irish R.M.*, which has qualities of observation, character-drawing and good writing about horses, scenery, dogs, hunting and Ireland that no modern man has approached. How two women came to write anything apparently so masculine as these stories and all those that followed is one of the mysteries of literature. To assume a pose, to imagine oneself someone else, has often been the best way to make a good book, and, despite all the merits of *The Real Charlotte*, I think that Miss Somerville and her cousin, Miss Martin, drew their best inspiration when make-believing they were Major Yeats, a Residential Magistrate. To me his adventures are inexhaustible; I find something new every time. No collection of the best humorous stories could justly omit 'The House of Fahy'; but I should be sorry to find it there, all the same, for no form of reading is so depressing as a collection of the best humorous stories.

Another book by a woman which I have read three times, always to find in it something fresh and irresistible, is *The Caravaners*, by the Countess Russell. Here again the author (who, however, needs no help) has been helped by the supposition that she was someone else; another woman writing as a man. And what a man—the Baron von Ottringel! Everyone knows that it is safe to expect a good time when this scalpel of a pen begins to dissect a German, but never has it led to such hilarious results as in *The Caravaners*, where the exposure is conducted by the victim himself. Miss Rose Macaulay is not so funny as the Irish ladies and 'Elizabeth', but she has the keenest wit, and she wants watching all the time. It does not do to read a single one of her sentences with a wandering eye. There is no living author whose next book I anticipate with so much impatience.

I feel so strongly about the 'R.M.' stories that I should like to insert here, although it has been printed before,



portions of an article that I wrote for the *Spectator* some years ago under the title 'The Two Ladies'. I imagined a congress of their admirers met to praise them.

'The discussion might, indeed, have begun by the old question "What are the best short stories in the world?" and my own insistence on the claims of this very "House of Fahy" to a place high on the list; because, as I should have urged, it relates an episode proper only to the short-story medium; there is no word too many or too few; it has atmosphere and character; it is absorbing; it has a beginning, a middle and an end—such an end!

"But what about 'The Maroon Pony'?" some one might have inquired. "Isn't that a perfect short story too?"

And I should have replied that it is.

"And 'Harrington's'?" some one else might have urged.

"Isn't that perfect? And it has an extra quality, for in addition to all the humour of it, and the wonderful picture of a country auction sale, it has that tragic touch. To my mind it is greater than 'The House of Fahy'."

And then I am sure that a most emphatic claim for 'Trinket's Colt' as the best of all would have been formulated, and by this time we should have been right in the thick of it, all eager to speak and be heard.

To me the Two Ladies have long been the only contemporary authors whom it is absolutely necessary to read twice instantly: the first time for the story itself, which is always so intriguing—and the more so as you get more familiar with the ingenuity of their methods—as to exact a high speed; and the second time for the detail, the little touches of observation and experience, and the amazing, and to an envious writer despairful, adequacy of epithet. And having read them twice, I find that whenever I pick them up again there is something new, something not fully tasted before. Indeed, at any rate in the *R.M.* series, they are the most trustworthy and re-readable of any writers of our time.

"Talking of observation and experience" (here I resume the report of the imaginary club of devotees), one said, "they know everything. That they should be wise about hunting and Irish life is natural. Hunting and Irish life

are their strong suit. But they know all about the sea too : no one has so etched in the horrors of a ground swell on a hot day. They know all about dogs—what dogs think and how dogs feel.”

“ But most remarkable of all,” said another, “ is their knowledge of man—and married man at that. Who would ever have guessed that Major Sinclair Yates was the invention of two single women ? I cannot find a single slip into sheer femininity in all his narratives.” . . .

The Irish idiom has always fascinated me, whether on flattering Irish lips or in literature ; and never is it more attractive in literature than when recorded by the Two Ladies. But I carry in my mind a delicious description of the Atlantic Ocean in one of the ill-fated Donn Byrne’s novels—*Hangman’s House*, I think—where an old Galway man calls it ‘ a sup of water, and if it wasn’t for the unnatural breadth of it, sure you could see the quick American people and them arguing on the sidewalks of New York ’. The other day, in the *Times*, Mr. Maurice Healy quoted a passage from a love-letter from a bare-foot Irish boy from beyond Bantry, where he wrote to his girl in America : ‘ Far away from where I am now there is a little gap in the hills, and beyond it the sea ; and ’tis there I do be looking the whole day long, for ’tis the nearest thing to yourself that I can see ’.

Finally, on this matter of reading—I am not intending to lay down the pen just yet, but there is no harm in saying here that my ideal of retirement or repose, when it comes, is to have a library entirely filled with the old books I like best and, whenever a new book comes out, make an effort to read it.

Should an occupation entailing more industry seem necessary, I would spend some of my time in grangerizing Horsfield’s *History of Sussex*, which would be at once a fascinating and unending task. Grangerizing, I may explain for the benefit of any reader who has not met the word, is the art of extra-illustration, or, in other words, the sacrifice of many books on the altar of one.

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST LIVING AUTHORS

The Rev. James Pycroft—Alfred de Keyser—A Sussex poetess—Edmund Yates—A. A. Dowty—Two Honourables—William Black—Poets and their looks—George Augustus Sala—A bad model—*The Illustrated London News*—*The Autocrat*—American influences—Joaquin Miller—A family puzzle—*Obiter Dicta*—*The Ten O'Clock*—Andrew Lang—The Shelley Society—A literary duty—Matthew Arnold—'Hans Breitmann'—Halliwell-Phillips—Edward Garnett—Dr. Garnett

I HAVE written elsewhere of the first real live literary men that I ever saw: all being at Brighton in the eighteen-seventies and eighties; but since that 'elsewhere' is probably unknown territory, except to me, there may be no harm in recapitulating.

The very first author of a book—and as it happened a book I possessed and knew by heart—that I ever saw was the Rev. James Pycroft, who wrote *The Cricket Field*. And it was in the cricket field that I used to see him, when I was a small boy of eight and he was a man of sixty-three: the County Ground at Hove. He was erect and active, with a pink face and the whitest hair and whiskers, a clergyman's black cape and tall hat. His habit was to walk round the ground, with frequent pauses as the ball was being delivered, usually alone but often talking animatedly with some old crony from the pavilion, where he was apparently too restless to sit. Many, many years later, when compiling an enthusiastic record of early cricket called *The Hambledon Men*, I was to find *The Cricket Field* of great service.

That was my first prose author. My first poet was less authentic: merely one of those oddities which every good-sized town can boast—a local newspaper bard. The im-

posing name of mine was Alfred de Keyser, and he was a wild-looking, grey-haired man, usually muttering to himself, with a long, lean neck, flowing clothes and an eager, impulsive manner of walking and thrusting forward a strange and rather distraught face. In fact, superficially, everything a poet should be. Not only did he write verse, but he advertised the fact by combining the duties of author, publisher and bookseller, himself offering for sale the leaflets on which his effusions were printed. I remember a line from a poem on the Brighton pier, which I thought splendid. There, he wrote, were to be found

‘brilliant night moths and butterflies of day.’

I have said that de Keyser was one of the poets common to every town large enough to have a newspaper; but there are poetesses too, and, now I come to think of it, I believe that my very first lyrical lion was a lioness, who antedated de Keyser by two or three years: an unmarried, cheerful, birdlike little woman who lived with her father, a retired brewer, in a Sussex village, and who contributed elegiac stanzas to the local paper and afterwards had copies struck off for distribution among her friends.

I was young enough to be awestruck in the presence of one of those marvellous beings who could get their poetry printed. Many of my relations scribbled verses for home consumption, but none reached type. ‘Did Miss Nelly really write that?’ I asked. ‘How wonderful!’ For she was so unlike a poet in every way—so round and brisk and facetious; but gossip credited her with a broken heart, underneath, and perhaps gossip was right, for she drowned herself not long afterwards in the conservatory tank. Poor Miss Nelly, she was my first poet; Alfred de Keyser a mere second. And I knew her to speak to! whereas Alfred de Keyser—beyond such intimacy as comes from offering a penny and receiving a broadsheet and a smile—I did not know at all.

Even less was my familiarity with the men of letters who, in my early years, were common objects of the sea-

shore. Chief of these was Edmund Yates, a burly squire with a heavy white moustache and two or three chins, who used to move majestically up and down the Front on a big black horse which no one had ever seen to trot. As it chanced, we had at home in a very miscellaneous library a curious book by Yates called *The Business of Pleasure*, which, since I was ready for anything in print so long as it was not religious, I read at an early age. We also had a poetical volume called *Mirth and Metre*, which was a far juicier morsel because it was written by Yates in collaboration with my darling Frank Smedley—the unassisted author of *Frank Fairleigh*. *Mirth and Metre* was a derivative of *The Ingoldsby Legends*, and, like all derivatives, inferior to its model, yet it was more fun than *The Business of Pleasure*. I have never seen either book since. But what later gave the portly and extremely cautious equestrian most interest in my eyes was the fact, as I had discovered, that it was he who was one of the causes of the quarrel between Dickens and Thackeray. These great writers were not destined ever to be intimate—their friends would prevent that, apart from the rivalry between them which was inevitable—but had it not been for Yates's article on Thackeray in *Town Talk* in 1858 there might have been no actual and painful breach.

Edmund Yates's *Business of Pleasure* was not the only odd book which I read at an early age and should probably have found unreadable ever after. We had also three paper-covered Victorian satires, published at I think a shilling, called respectively *The Siliad*, *The Coming K*—and *Jon Duan*, written in heroic couplets and bearing upon the Court and politicians of the eighteen-seventies. What there was in them to appeal to a very small boy, I cannot imagine; but I diligently perused them throughout. They were, I believe, at any rate in part, the work of a journalist named A. A. Dowty, who under the pseudonym O. P. Q. Philander Smith, wrote also a comic history of England which I found in a hotel at Alton when, as a child, I was taken to a Monthly Meeting there, and

which I preferred to all the deliberations of Elders, Ministers and Overseers.

The second man of letters upon whom I used to gaze had a double claim to reverence, for he was not only a poet but an Honourable—and Honourable has always seemed to me the most attractive of all titles. This was Roden Noel, a Byronic figure in a black cape and black soft hat, with an irregular tragic face, who walked always alone and always deep in thought. He was author of several volumes, the best known of which is *A Little Child's Monument*.

My third Brighton literary celebrity was also an Honourable, but how different! An artificial old dandy, with waxed moustache and imperial, eyeglass and pinched waist all complete, dressed in summer in white, with a sunshade, who paraded up and down the Front ogling every woman that appealed to his calculating eye: the Hon. Hugh Rowley, who painted fans and was the author of two ignominious books which had some vogue in their day: *Puniana* and *More Puniana*. Nothing could be wider than the gulf between Roden Noel and Hugh Rowley, and I never saw them together.

My fourth Brighton celebrity was better known, for his fame had spread far and wide and for a while he was a best-seller: a little man in a bowler, with fiery features and highly magnifying spectacles, who, like Roden Noel, walked alone; but whereas Roden Noel kept to the Hove end and Edmund Yates's sedate charger paced the whole distance, William Black—for the little red-faced man was he—ranged between Paston Place and the Aquarium. He was, if I remember rightly, the favourite living novelist of my mother, or perhaps sharing that position with his less mundane fellow countryman, George Macdonald.

It is long since I saw a book by either. I read much of Black and found him very good company; but Macdonald I knew only by his fairy tales, *The Princess and Curdie* and *At the Back of the North Wind*, which I often recommend to little people to-day.

It was very exciting for us when William Black wrote a

novel called *The Beautiful Wretch*, with Brighton as its background. His most popular book was, I think, *The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton*, in which he drew from life the beautiful American actress who was dazzling the eyes of the playgoers at that time and enchanting their ears with her melodious voice: Miss Mary Anderson, whom I saw in the doubled parts of Perdita and Hermione in *A Winter's Tale* at the Lyceum in 1887, but was not to meet until 1918, when she gave me some reminiscences of her friend Edwin Abbey, the American artist, for a book I was then writing.

Not having any preconceived idea of what Edmund Yates and William Black were like, I was not surprised when I saw them. They seemed to be more or less right. But I have had since as many recoils upon the first sight of favourite authors as anybody else. Why we are so exacting about the looks of our pet writers, when there is no standard for artists and musicians, I cannot explain. All I know is that it is so, and that the fact that I have not a long white beard has been a cause of shock and even grief to many of my readers who have met me in person or have seen my photograph.

I think that the earliest disappointment of this kind from which I suffered was when, at Oxford in 1892, I heard Walter Pater lecture on some Renaissance subject, and was displeased by his heavy jowl and want of esprit. Poets in particular are liable to impart pain. Roden Noel, my first poet, looked the part; W. B. Yeats looks it; Rupert Brooke seemed to be more than a poet: Apollo himself; Francis Thompson, as I say later in this book, would have been taken for a poet by even the least discriminating observer; Swinburne clearly lived, rapt, in a sphere of his own, and Richard Le Gallienne, whom I used to see in the 'nineties, might even be thought to have been made up by Clarkson on strict poetical lines.

But who, meeting Ralph Hodgson with his attendant bull-terriers, would dream that here was the author of that lovely song of 'Eve', that glorious 'Song of Beauty'?

' Here was the strangest pair  
In the world anywhere,  
Eve in the bells and grass  
Kneeling and he  
Telling his story low. . . .  
Singing birds saw them go  
Down the dark path to  
The Blasphemous Tree.'

Who, meeting Walter de la Mare, with or without bull-terriers, would expect from him such lines as these?—

' Here lies a most beautiful lady,  
Light of step and heart was she ;  
I think she was the most beautiful lady  
That ever was in the West Country.  
But beauty vanishes ; beauty passes ;  
However rare—rare it be ;  
And when I crumble, who will remember  
This lady of the West Country ? '

There is nothing about Laurence Binyon inconsistent with the claims of the Muses, and about John Drinkwater there is a definite suggestion of those ladies. But Sir Henry Newbolt looks more like an eminent Permanent Official than the author of *Admirals All*, and Rudyard Kipling, though noticeably a man of mark, does not make one think of *The Seven Seas* and 'Recessional'. Rather might he be a planter home on leave. A. E. Housman may convey the impression of scholarship, but not of lyrical genius, and the Poet Laureate it would intensely puzzle strangers to place. Of all the imaginative writers of my time I think Barrie looks most like his work.

I have been recalling the late eighteen-seventies and early 'eighties. Later a demigod of mine settled also at Brighton and was to be seen, in a grey hat with a black band, a white waistcoat and sponge-bag trousers, like a perpetual and incorrigible wedding guest. This was George Augustus Sala, whose suggestion of conviviality was increased by a very red nose and one half-closed eye.



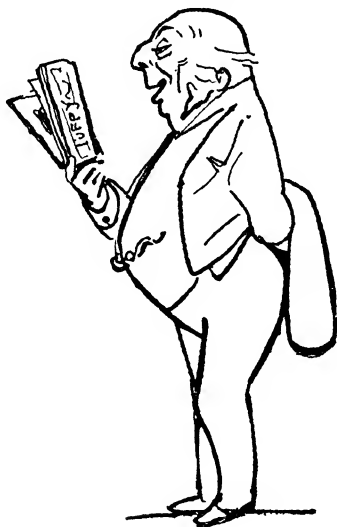
Although it was interesting to gaze upon Yates and William Black, Roden Noel and Hugh Rowley, I never wanted to write like them. My literary ambition did not run in their direction. The man-of-letters whom I had set up as my model was Sala ; for when I was fourteen I formed the habit of reading, in the *Illustrated London News*, his 'Echoes of the Week', signed G. A. S., and made up my mind that one day I would succeed him. They seemed to me to be perfect ; and indeed only a ripe, well-stored mind, or rather memory, or possibly even a wonderful series of Commonplace Books, could have produced so much that was alert and amusing and oddly informative.

But the ambition was not realized. There I was, all unoccupied, when Sala retired, but his immediate successor was James Payn, who substituted his own charm and lightness for Sala's erudition and what might be called his Notes-and-Queryism. And then came L. F. Austin, who was lighter still ; and then the present contributor, G. K. Chesterton, who every week, with unflagging spirit, improvises variations on a new theme, his challenging belligerent text surrounding a picture of often startling unrelatedness.

James Payn I never knew, but his son-in-law, G. E. Buckle, once editor of the *Times* and later of Queen Victoria's letters, and Rudie Lehmann, Payn's friend and mine, have told me many pleasant things about him : his courage as an invalid, his passion for whist, his quickness in jest ; but I used to see Austin now and then : a tall handsome man with tired eyes ; and G. K. C. I know well and would like to meet oftener, for the orchestra of his great brain is always in tune, ready instantaneously to begin. I know no one, except perhaps Bernard Shaw, whose reaction is so swift and whose arguments are in such good order. But the difference is that Shaw has had them ready for a long while, whereas Chesterton summons them from space, and with them come crowding in whimsicalities which Shaw would deprecate as interlopers and disdain, but at which Chesterton exuberantly



'AMERICA READS "BUSTED BILL".'  
A prophetic portrait of Mr. Maxton



SOME KIND UNCLE'

ILLUSTRATIONS BY G. K. CHESTERTON FOR AN ARTICLE ON CHILDREN'S BOOKS  
BY E. V. LUCAS IN *THE SPEAKER*, DECEMBER 10, 1904

chuckles. It is a great joy to hear Chesterton laughing at his own jokes: with a laughter to which he is fully entitled, for they have been as fresh to him as to his hearers. Shaw has no such surprises: his road is always a high road without tributary lanes. He talks as he writes: light without shade. But a light how crystal clear!

I have more reason than most people to be grateful to Bernard Shaw, for in addition to giving me the pleasure of his books and plays, he taught me to swim. We were staying in the same cottage in Cornwall and bathing every day, and he, one of the best swimmers in the world, took me in hand and made what had been so difficult before simple and safe. I followed him less easily on land, for his talk was about things which I had never analysed but took for granted, with emphasis always laid on the folly and wrongheadedness of every one else. Counsels of perfection too often. He also bewildered me, unfamiliar then with the iron laws of individualism, by saying that a short story for children which I had just written, called 'The Ameliorator', the teaching of which was that we should do things for others, was the 'most immoral thing he had ever read.'

Sala, when he lived in Brighton, was the editor of a weekly paper named, but too late, after himself. *Sala's Journal* might have meant something in the 'sixties and 'seventies, when its director, as a young lion of the *Daily Telegraph*, got into *Friendship's Garland*; it meant nothing in the 'nineties. But by the time I saw him my devotion had long since died the death, a result accelerated by reading two meandering and maundering novels from his pen, *The Baddington Peerage* and *The Seven Sons of Mammon*, which Thackeray, no mean judge, relabelled *The Paddington Beerage* and *The Seven Tons of Gammon*. These were terrible. One does not look to a descriptive reporter like Sala for good novels; but one expects so capable a workman to make a better job of it, once he has begun.

A few words about the career of this very unusual man—writer, artist, collector, traveller, gourmet, antiquary—

may not be out of place. Born in London in 1828, he was the posthumous son of the son of an Italian ballet master. His mother, an operatic singer, teacher and actress, having four other children, and only her own industry to support her, the little G. A. S. was brought up very sketchily by aunts, servants and acquaintances to whom his very remarkable precocity appealed—so remarkable that before he was ten he had written a tragedy in French. At the age of eleven he was sent to a *lycée* in Paris, among his school-fellows being Alexandre Dumas *fils*. On returning to London he became the pupil of a miniature painter and at the age of fifteen was thrown upon the world. Until 1852 he was dependent on his artistic ability, which comprised illustrating books, painting scenery, and even the construction of a panorama of the Great Exhibition; but he then, on account of failing eyesight, exchanged the pencil for the pen, having been encouraged by Dickens, who in 1851 accepted an article by him for *Household Words*. Dickens, who had always been his chief source of inspiration and whom he sometimes flagrantly imitated, continued to employ him, and it was he who gave him his first commission as a special correspondent, sending him to Russia to describe the aftermath of the Crimean War. Sala's first foreign tour for the *Daily Telegraph*, with which his name was to be so closely identified, was in 1863, when he was in America watching the Civil War. Thereafter, for many years, he was abroad more than at home; but when at home, at the *Daily Telegraph* offices, legend runs that the Editor would lock him in his room, with the proper ration of refreshment, until the article was finished.

Considering how fond he was of the good things of life, and the many temptations to which such a conversable companion is liable, the amount of work he did is amazing. Had he been possessed of more prudence or money-sense, and could have resisted the lure of old prints, old china and old books—particularly old cookery-books—his last years would have been more leisurely and peaceful. As

it was, out of touch with new generations of readers who were without any of his delight in the past, he had to work to the end.

The Sala of the 'Echoes of the Week' (which he once himself burlesqued in *Punch* under the heading 'Egos of the Week') was no more the essential Sala than the Sala of the bad novels. At his best he needed more room than a paragraph and less control than a plot exerts or should exert. I used to have all his books; I now have but one, and that his masterpiece, *Twice Round the Clock*, published, like everything he wrote, serially first (in 1858 in *The Welcome Guest*) and as a book later. The scheme was to depict London life from 4 a.m. all through the day and night till 3 a.m. The first scene is Billingsgate, the last a Fancy Dress Ball followed by night charges at Bow Street. Between these extremes we have the inside of the *Times* office, the Law Courts, changing the Guard, a fashionable wedding, a Stock Exchange, Tattersall's, a Green Room, a debate in the House, supper at Evans's, and a fire. Sala was then just thirty and at the top of his form. There is some pinchbeck among the gold, of course, and too many hares are started, for his besetting sin as a writer was always to be reminded of something else; but the result is a very lively series of kaleidoscopic views, never flagging in spirit and quite remarkable for the richness of allusion and knowledge of the world. There can have been no Man about Town even twice his age to whom this young journalist could not give points.

I quote two passages. The first is Sala calling on his own experience, and it is interesting not only in itself but for its light on the childhood of a writer who was to take the whole globe as his province. The second is pure description.

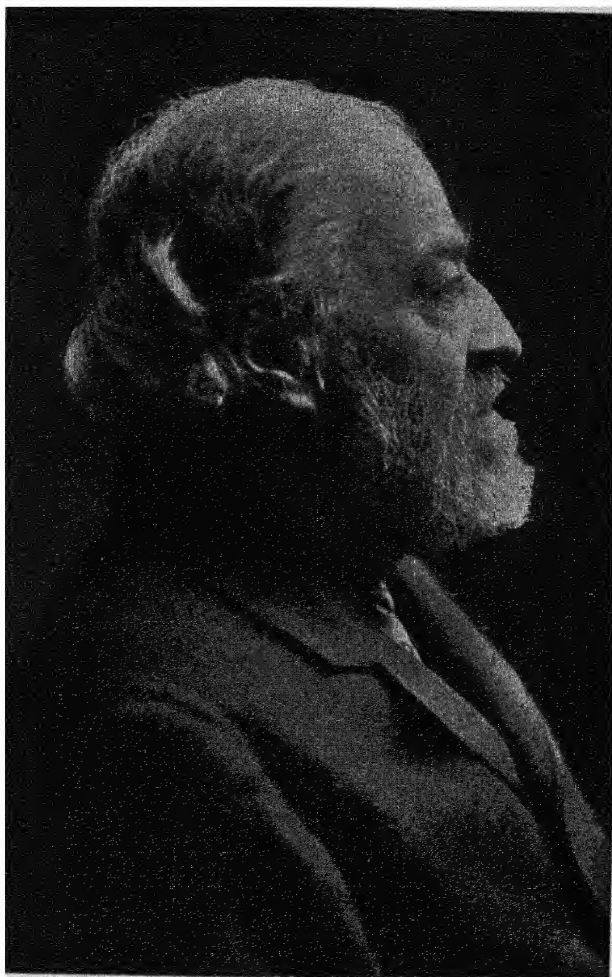
'TWO P.M. FROM REGENT STREET TO HIGH CHANGE'

'I am again in Regent Street, but at another window, and in another house. There is no nurse now, but a genteel young woman, aged about thirty—she asked me once, for

fun, how old she was, and I guessed in all youthful seriousness, fifty, whereupon she slapped me—to take care of me. Her name is Sprackmore, she has long corkscrew ringlets, and is very pious, and beneath her auspices I first study the “Loss of the *Kent*, East Indiaman”, and the “Dairyman’s Daughter”. She has fits, too, occasionally. I am just of that age to be a hollow-eyed little boy in a tunic, with a frill and a belt, and to be dreadfully afraid of the parent I used a year before to love and caress with such fearless confidence. They say I am a clever child, and my cleverness is encouraged by being told that I am not to ask questions, and that I had much better go and play with my toys than mope over that big volume of Lyttelton’s “History of England”, lent to me by Mr. Somebody, the lawyer—I see him now, very stout and gray, at the funeral whenever any of us dies: of which volume—it is in very shabby condition—I break the top-cover off by letting it fall from the chair, which is my reading-desk. I suffer agonies of terror and remorse for months, lest the fracture should be discovered, though I have temporarily repaired it by means of a gimlet and a piece of twine. Then, one bright day, my cousin Sarah gives me a bright five-shilling piece—I take her to the opera now, but she always remembers my childish dependence upon her, and insists upon paying the cab home—and take Lyttelton’s “History”, still with great fear and trembling, to a book-binder’s in Broad Street, Golden Square, who tells me that the “hends is jagged”, and that there must be a new back, lettering and gilding to the book. He works his will with it, and charges me four shillings and sixpence out of the five-shilling piece for working it; but to tell of the joyful relief I felt when I bring Lyttelton’s “History” back safe and sound. I do not get rid of my perturbation entirely, however, till I have rubbed the back against the carpet a little to soil it, in order that it may not look too new. Oh! the agonies, the Laocoon-like conscience windings, the Promethean tortures, that children suffer through these accidental breakages! Oh! the unreasoning cruelty of parents, who punish children for such mischances! So I am the little boy in a tunic; and I daresay that, with my inquisitiveness, and my moping over books, I am an

intolerable little nuisance. I am at the Regent Street window, and much speculation is rife as to whether the King, who is lying mortally sick at Windsor, is dead. For it is within a few minutes of eleven, and at that time the well-known troop of Horse Guards pass on their way to St. James's; and it is reasonably inferred that, if King William be gathered to his fathers, the standard will be furled. The Guards pass; they wore helmets, with plumes above them shaped like black mutton chops—not the casques with the flowing horse-hair they wear now; and to be sure the standard is furled, in a species of drab umbrella case. The King is dead for sure; nay, he does not die for a full week afterwards; the flag was merely furled because the day was dark and lowering, presaging rain.

'I told you hours since that I lived in the house in Regent Street in which the Marquis de Bourbel forged his letters of credit. I think that I am qualified to speak of the place, for, walking down it the other day, I counted no less than eleven houses, between the two circuses, in which I had at one time dwelt. But they were all early, those remembrances, and connected with the time when the colonnade of the Quadrant existed—" *La ville de Londres* " as the foreign engravers of pictorial note-paper used grandiloquently to call it. Whatever could have possessed our Commissioner of Woods and Forests to allow those unrivalled arcades to be demolished! The stupid tradesmen, whose purblind, shop-till avarice led them to petition for the removal of the columns, gained nothing by the change, for the Quadrant, as a lounge for wet weather, was at once destroyed; and I see now many of the houses, once let out in superior apartments, occupied as billiard-rooms and photographic studios, and many of the shops invaded and conquered by cheap tailors. The Quadrant Colonnade afforded not only a convenient shelter beneath, but it was a capital promenade for the dwellers in the first-floors above. The *entresols* certainly were slightly gloomy; and moustached foreigners, together with some gaily-dressed company still naughtier, could with difficulty be restrained from prowling backwards and forwards between Glasshouse Street and the County Fire Office. But,



BERTRAM DOBELL





JOSEPH CONRAD LISTENING TO MUSIC  
*From the drypoint by Muirhead Bone*

perambulating Regent Street at all hours of the day and night, as I do now frequently, I see no diminution in the number of moustached, or rouged, or naughty faces, whose prototypes were familiar to me, years ago, in the brilliant Quadrant. As to the purlieus of the County Fire Office, they are confusion, and a scandal to London and its police. The first-floor balconies above were in my childhood most glorious playgrounds. There I kept preserves of broken bottles and flowerpots ; on those leads I inscribed fantastic devices in chalk and with penknives, drawing silver diagrams through the cake of dust and dried regrain that covered the metal ; and often have I come to domestic grief through an irresistible propensity for poaching on the balconies of the neighbours on either side.

‘ Still in a state of tunic-hood, I remember a very tall handsome gentleman, with a crimson velvet under-waistcoat—I saw his grave in Père la Chaise last winter—who was my great aider and abettor in these juvenile escapades. He had a wondrous weapon of offence called a “ sabarcane ”, a delightful thing (to me then), half walking-stick, half pea-shooter, from which he used to discharge clay pellets at the vagrant cats on the adjoining balconies. He it was who was wont to lean over the balcony, and fish for people’s hats with a salmon-hook affixed to the extremity of a tandem-whip ; he it was who came home from the Derby (quite in a friendly manner) to see us one evening, all white—white hat, white coat, white trousers, white waistcoat, white neckerchief, white boots, to say nothing of the dust and the flour with which he had been plentifully besprinkled at Kennington Gate. He had won heavily on some horse long since gone to grass for ever, was very merry, and insisted upon winding-up our new French clock with the snuffers. He it was who made nocturnal excursions from parapet to parapet along the leads, returning with bewildering accounts of bearded men who were gambling with dice at No. 92 ; of the tenor of the Italian opera, who, knife in hand, was pursuing his wife (in her night-dress) about the balcony at No. 74 ; and of Mademoiselle Follejambe, the *premier sujet* of the same establishment, who was practising *pirouettes* before a cheval glass at the open window of No. 86, while Mademoiselle Follejambe’s

mamma, with a red pocket-handkerchief tied round her old head, was drinking *anisette* out of a teacup.

'You must be forbearing with me, if, while I speak of Regent Street, I interlard my speech with foreign languages a little. For, from its first erection, the Quadrant end of Regent Street has been the home of the artistic foreigners who are attracted to London during the musical and operatic season, less by inclination for the climate and respect for the institutions of England, than by a profound admiration for the circular effigies, in gold (with neatly milled edges) of Her Majesty the Queen, which John Bull so liberally bestows on those who squall or fiddle for him, provided they be of foreign extraction. Let me not be too unjust, however, to Bull. Find him but a real English tenor, and J. B. will smother him in bank-notes, and deafen him with plaudits. From the balconies of Regent Street, I have seen the greatest *cantatrici* and *ballerine* of this age. The Grand Cham of tenors, who has *never* been replaced—no Signor Mario, no Sim Reeves, no Mr. George Perren—the incomparable Rubini, had lodgings opposite, once, to where we dwelt, at a shawl shop. I have watched the sedulous care which that eminent man took of his health, marvelled at the multitudinous folds of silk or woollen stuff, like the turban of an Asiatic, with which he encircled his invaluable throat when he took outdoor exercise. I have seen, through his open window, the basso of bassos, Papa Lablache, the man with the lion's head, the Falstaffian abdomen, and the ten times stentorian lungs, eat macaroni for twenty-seven consecutive minutes, till he seemed determined to outdo all the ribbon-swallowing conjurers who had ever lived. We used to say that he was practising for Leporello. He had a kindly heart, Papa Lablache, and preserved a kindly remembrance of the hearty English people, among whom he made his fortune. Though he would sometimes facetiously declare, that when his voice was no longer fit to be heard in a Continental city, he would come to England to settle, and sing "*Fra questi sordi*" among these deaf ones—for whom he would still be quite good enough—his heart never cooled towards the old country; and, moribund at Naples when the supreme Hour was fast arriving, he raised himself on his couch,

and essayed to sing a song he loved very well—"Home! sweet Home!" But, as the silver cord loosened, he murmured, "*Mi manca la voce!*"—"My voice fails me"; and so died.'

A man who can write like that is not to be scoffed at. And here is a passage from the chapter called

'TWO A.M. A LATE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS'

'Standing in the narrow Gothic railed-off space reserved for the public—the throne at the opposite extremity of the House—you may see on one of the benches to the right, almost every forenoon—Saturday and Sunday excepted—during the session, a very old man with a white head, and attired in a simple frock and trousers of shepherd's plaid. It is a leonine head, and the white locks are bushy and profuse. So, too, the eyebrows, penthouses to eyes somewhat weak now, but that can flash fire yet upon occasions. The face is ploughed with wrinkles, as well it may be, for the old man will never see four-score years again, and of these, three-score, at the very least, have been spent in study and the hardest labour, mental and physical. The nose is a marvel—protuberant, rugose, aggressive, inquiring, and defiant: unlovely, but intellectual. There is a trumpet mouth, a belligerent mouth, projecting and self-asserting; largish ears, and on chin or cheeks no vestige of hair. Not a beautiful man this on any theory of beauty, Hogarthesque, Ruskinesque, Winckelmanesque, or otherwise. Rather a shaggy, gnarled, battered, weather-beaten, ugly, faithful, Scotch-colley type. Not a soft, imploring, yielding face. Rather a tearing, mocking, pugnacious, cast of countenance. The mouth is fashioned to the saying of harsh, hard, impertinent things: not cruel, but downright; but never to whisper compliments, or simper out platitudes. A nose, too, that can snuff the battle afar off, and with dilated nostrils breathe forth a glory that is sometimes terrible; but not a nose for a pouncet-box, or a Covent Garden bouquet, or a *flacon* of Frangipani. Would not care much for truffles either, I think, or the delicate aroma of sparkling Moselle. Would prefer onions or strongly-infused malt and hops: sometimes honest and unsophisticated. Watch

this old man narrowly, young visitor to the Lords. Scan his furrowed visage. Mark his odd angular ways and gestures passing uncouth. Now he crouches, very doglike, on his crimson bench : clasps one shepherd's plaid leg in both his hands. Botherem, Q.C., is talking nonsense, I think. Now the legs are crossed, and the hands thrown behind the head ; now he digs his elbows into the little Gothic writing-table before him, and buries the hands in that puissant white hair of his. The quiddities of Floorem, Q.C., are beyond human patience. Then with a wrench, a wriggle, a shake, a half turn and half start up—still very doglike, but of the Newfoundland rather, now, he asks a lawyer or a witness a question. Question very sharp and to the point, not often complimentary bytimes, and couched in that which is neither broad Scotch nor Northumbrian burr, but a rebellious mixture of the two. Mark him well, eye him closely : you have not much time to lose. Alas ! the giant is very old ; though with frame yet unenfeebled, with intellect yet gloriously unclouded. But the sands are running, ever running. Watch him, mark him, eye him, score him on your mind tablets : then home ; and in after years it may be your lot to tell your children, that once at least you have seen with your own eyes the famous Lord of Vaux ; once listened to the voice that has shaken thrones and made tyrants tremble, that has been a herald of delivrance of millions pining in slavery and captivity ; a voice that has given utterance, in man's most eloquent words, to the noblest, wisest thoughts lent to this Man of Men by Heaven ; a voice that has been trumpet-sounding these sixty years past in defence of Truth, and Right, and Justice—in advocacy of the claims of learning and industry, and of the liberties of the great English people, hearing in a Walhalla of wise heroes, after Francis of Verulam and Isaac of Grantham ; the voice of one who is worthily a lord, but who will be yet better remembered, and to all time—remembered enthusiastically and affectionately—as the champion of all good and wise and beautiful Human Things—Harry Brougham.'

Brougham was then, in 1858, eighty. He lived ten years longer.

Let me round off these samples of the floridest and most discursive pen that ever wrote by quoting a parody of Sala by Edmund Yates, which appeared in the Christmas number of *The Comic Times*, a short-lived rival to *Punch* which H. J. Byron edited and which began and ended with 1863. Yates, who was a life-long friend of Sala, was his sub-editor when he had founded *Temple Bar* a year or so before.

In *The Comic Times* article the idea is that a consignment of British authors reaches Pluto in the nether regions and each has to provide a specimen of his talents.

“ Well, I don’t know ! ” said Pluto, “ it may be because I’ve not lived in the world lately, but I can’t make out half what these fellows say. Here ! you ! do you know anything to tell me ? ” and he beckoned to a ghost with very short black hair, who was taking notes in a metallic book.

“ Ay, Sir ! ” said the black-haired ghost, “ Ay, DIS HADES CLYTOPOLON HOGELASTUS ORCUS PLUTO there be many things that I wot of, and perhaps of thy history among the number ! for I am of the streets streety, and of the roads roady, and of the pavement pavementy. I have seen most things under many aspects and know them tolerably well. I have taken catalogue of my Lord Mayor of London, his furs and furbelows, his silk stockings, his powdered footmen, his watch chain and his shining boots, and I have noted the beggar’s rags and inventoried the cadger’s bandages. I have had my breakfast in bed, and my dinner at Cann’s leg-of-beef house, and my supper in the thieves’ kitchen. I call a spade a spade, and limn even as Joseph William Mallord Turner, sometime known as ‘ Puggy Booth ’, painted in broad, bright, iridescent colours. I have had the key of the street, and have known the secrets of the gas, and have communed with the Macadam paving stones, St. Peter’s bowing to a palsied Pope, Il Duomo at Florence, jack-booted Life Guards trooping in St. Paul’s Churchyard, the Nevskoi Prospektiv with the Giant Czar, Hogarth gravng pewter plates, Churchill striding through the Chapter Coffee-house, Colonel Quagg converted. Twining arms have wound around me, lipping lips have whispered in my ear, and I have known

the face of brass and the bowels of platinum, and the heart of marble."

" "Bless my heart!" said Proserpine, "what a lot the gentleman has seen."

" "Too much for me!" growled Pluto."

*Twice Round the Clock*, which has many excellent outline drawings by an artist named William M'Connell, who died at the age of thirty-four, would not be likely to sell now, but it would make a very useful model to an observant journalist—such as H. V. Morton—for a recurring series. There are so many names of men and places in it that I can think of no more amusing task for a social historian with leisure and means than to prepare an annotated and grangerized edition.

My desire to write like Sala was succeeded by a much saner ambition—to write like Oliver Wendell Holmes. I was fifteen when *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* was given to me—again by my uncle Sam—in the little pocket edition of American Authors which David Douglas of Edinburgh was then publishing: the same David Douglas who later was to edit and issue in its entirety Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*, that great sane book. The little series, with its polished paper covers and attractive uncrowded page, was my introduction to serious American writing. Oliver Wendell Holmes seemed to me the perfect blend of gravity and levity, and I quickly passed on to *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* and *The Poet*. The way of this smiling philosopher, this understanding critic, was surely the way to write! I think so still, but now I know, as I did not know then, that the style is the man: no one must try to imitate anybody. Our methods of approach must be our own, our thoughts must be our own, or we had better take to the sword or the ploughshare: anything but the pen.

Douglas's American Authors were for a while all I read. From Holmes I passed to John Burroughs, half a dozen of whose collections of essays were in the series; to William Allen White, to T. B. Aldrich, with short stories, to Brander Matthews and H. C. Bunner, with short stories in collabora-

tion, and to Blanche Willis Howard with an amusing novel, *One Summer*. I did not find them equally good : Holmes stood out as the king ; but they had a new quality, different from English writers, and they marked the division between the stories and nothing but stories which I had been reading and the more reflective books that I was going to read.

Charles Dudley Warner's *My Summer in a Garden* and Lowell's *Fireside Travels* were two of the books, not in the Douglas series, that ought to have been there. Many years later I was to persuade the Oxford Press to re-issue the *Fireside Travels*, which I think a fascinating work : one of the best books which, without any Elian devices, would not, but for Elia, have been written. Lowell's more famous collection of essays, *My Study Windows*, I also read and admired, but there is a quality about *Fireside Travels* which is lacking in the more pretentious work. Thoreau's *Walden* I read too, largely because of John Burroughs' praises ; while his eulogy of Whitman, entitled 'The Flight of the Eagle', in one of the little Douglas volumes sent me to *Leaves of Grass* : the only one of the books I am now naming to which I still return. To try to write like Walt Whitman never occurred to me, but I was glad when the time came and I needed a title for my anthology, *The Open Road*, to borrow it from him. 'What a wind !' as somebody said of another poet—I forget both of them.

The only American writer with whom I could never get on terms was Emerson, who seemed to me to specialize too much in perfection. His essays struck me also as being notes for essays rather than the finished article, and for all their compressed nutriment, as of pemmican, I resented that. Perhaps I was too near Holmes on the one hand and Goldsmith on the other. Also it must be remembered that these American explorations occurred before I was seventeen.

In those far-off days I probably read American books which many Americans disregarded. Joaquin Miller's, for example. I had his *Songs of the Sierras*, *Joaquin et Al*



and *Memorie and Rime*. There was a narrative poem called 'With Walker in Nicaragua' with the very fibre of the fine romantic fustian of the cinema in it. A musician in search of a theme might look at Miller's verse. As for his prose, it was in one of his stories, 'The Colonel Bill Williams Mine', belonging, I suppose, to the 'seventies, that I first met with the word 'bloody' in its vulgar form as a depreciative adjective or forceful adverb. An English peer out in the wild west used it, and I remember what a shock it was. Times and manners change: I was reading the other day a humorous novel—not a realistic document—by a canon of the Church of England, where there are three 'bloodies' in as many pages. They also were a shock to me, although no longer one of surprise.

But I did not at once begin to write like Holmes, any more than I had begun to write like Sala: in fact as a schoolboy I wrote very little; and students of heredity who refuse to believe in spontaneously engendered tendencies would be hard put to it to account for subsequent pre-occupation with pen and ink, for there are no writers among my direct forbears. It is true that a member of the Verrall family, William Verrall, landlord of the White Hart at Lewes, wrote *A Complete System of Cookery*, 1759, but he was a collateral ancestor; while I have a little note-book entitled *Original riddles propounded by Margaret Lucas to puzzle the wits of her beloved father, Christmas Day, 1857*, the author being my Aunt Margaret, whom I never saw, and the recipient my grandfather Edward Lucas, who died when I was six. One of the riddles is so intricate that in these days of cross-word puzzles I am tempted to transcribe it, not merely as a series of problems (which I have been unable to solve) but to prove that Aunt Margaret could manage prosody.

'In lands where Romish faith prevails  
 I and my friends abound,  
 And with a variation small,  
 One which you could not hear at all,  
 In deserts vast are found.

But most at merry Christmas time  
The children love my face.  
For then in joyous guise I'm seen,  
All dressed in blue and red and green,  
Their festival to grace.

Cut off my head, oh cruel act !  
My life at best is short,  
But give another, and I rise  
At once before your wondering eyes,  
If not before your thought.

Now change again, and if you will  
A double head bestow,  
I'll show you goods both cheap and rare  
To clothe the poor and deck the fair,  
Stuffs, silk and calico.

If you will change my double head  
You'll see that I am able  
To jump and run right merrily,  
And e'en a frequent guest to be  
Upon your dinner table.

My shifting head may rest at last,  
But now my tail must go ;  
In burning Africa I dwell,  
In South America as well,  
And other lands also.

And though they say I'm cold and high,  
And somewhat stern and bold,  
I yet sometimes will condescend  
To act the part of genial friend  
And keep you from the cold.

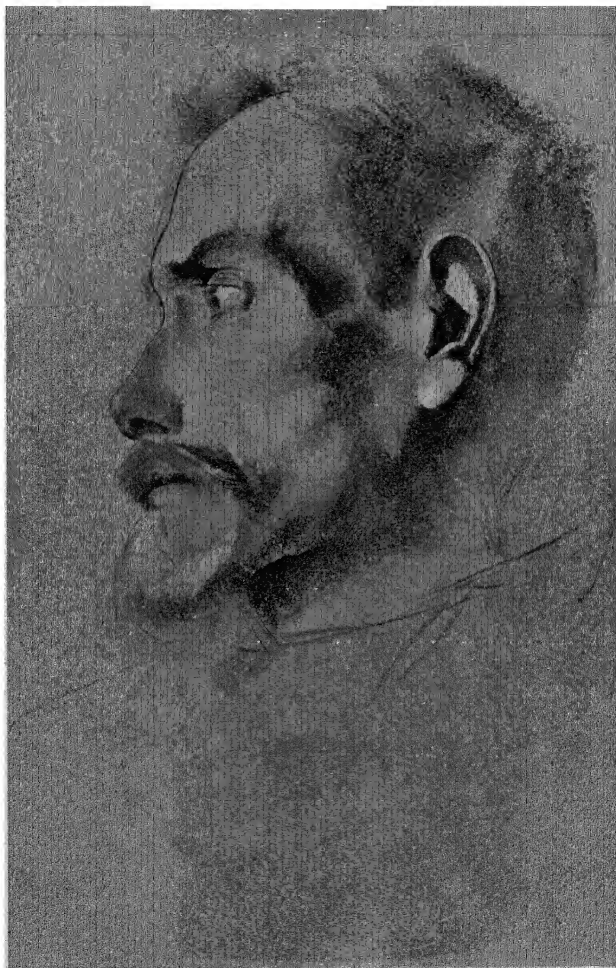
Beware how you behead again,  
The act you may repent,  
For thus disfigured I should be  
Rude, fickle, impudent and free,  
On mischief still intent.'

As the little book does not include answers, I cannot give the key ; but there is perhaps enough evidence here to indicate that writing was in the family. But a better theory is that I wrote because I wanted to. Most people do what they want to do, and I was no exception.

Having abandoned Sala as a model, I was stirred to emulate the author of *The Citizen of the World*, which was given to me early in 1884 by the same uncle Samuel, who was the greatest living influence that I knew in those early impressionable years. I wish it had been possible to give the world another work of such sagacity, humour and kindly and limpid persuasive prose as Goldsmith's ironical masterpiece ; but these things cannot be.

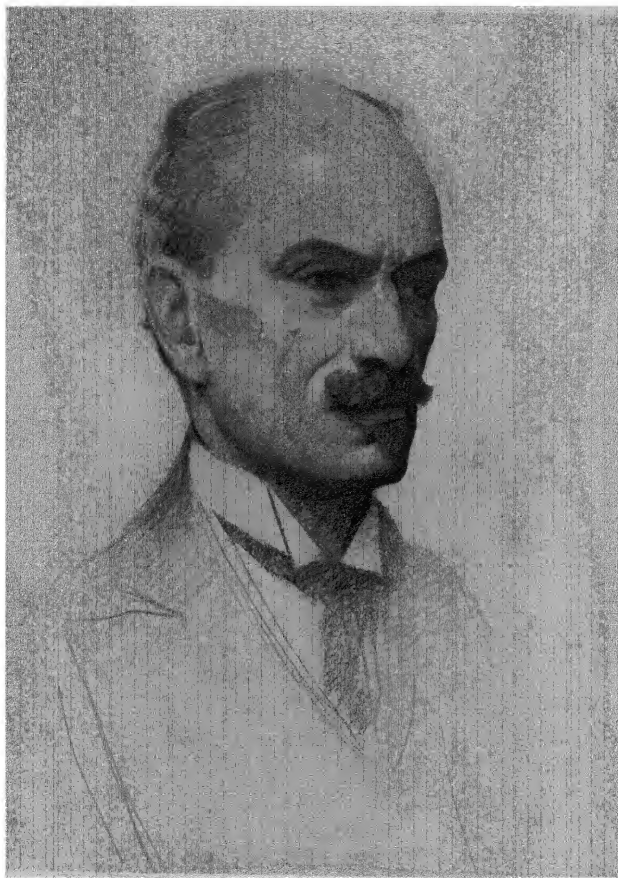
My next literary god was the author of *Obiter Dicta*, published in 1884, which was the first book of essays by a new writer that I bought. I still recall the feeling of well-being which warmed me as I read that vigorous, witty, sagacious and good-humoured work. Much later in life, when I came to know Augustine Birrell, I found him of a piece with his book ; indeed I have met no author whose spoken word was so like his written. His tongue, however, goes farther than his pen ; he is the most uncompromising talker I know. He is also the readiest after-dinner speaker : apt, humorous, scornful, whimsically aggressive and audible all over the room. I doubt if he prepares a sentence of it. He has a presence too, very like Thackeray in the Boehm statuette.

I think that my next exemplar was Andrew Lang, whose causerie 'At the Sign of the Ship' in *Longman's Magazine* I used to devour, and whose *Letters to Dead Authors* was, I thought, one of the best books of 1886. Lang was the first public man, a stranger, to whom I summoned up enough courage to write—and he was also the last. He had made an allusion which I could not place, and my letter was to ask him to explain it. He replied very briefly—and for once legibly—giving the reference, but adding that for schoolboys to take up the time of busy authors came under the heading of 'cheek' : a rebuke which sank



FRANCIS THOMPSON

*From the drawing by the Hon. Neville Lytton, October 1907*



MAURICE HEWLETT

*From the drawing by J. Kerr Lawson*

deeply in. None the less his intellect continued to fascinate me ; he truly possessed all the talents. Everything that he did he did with style ; and I wish that we could have one of these new omnibus books containing all his best work, but they seem to be kept for the story writers. Among the graver inclusions I should insist on his brief memoir of his uncle, the classical scholar, W. Y. Sellar. During Lang's lifetime, Pett Ridge, the sympathetic transcriber of Cockney comedy and tragedy, collected a number of his articles from the *Daily News* and made a book of them called *Lost Leaders*. There is therefore a good precedent.

It was Lang who in, I think, his life of Stafford Northcote, first said that it was the duty of biographers to relate the favourite humorous stories of their subjects, as these always shed a strong and vivid light on character. That struck me as very sound advice, but it is not too much followed. I have seldom been so well rewarded by the perusal of a weekly paper as when, many years ago, I found in the *Saturday Review* Lang's blank-verse account of the founding of the Shelley Society, printed as prose, which, in default of repeating any favourite humorous anecdotes, I quote here. I used to know much of it by heart. The four rhymed lines in the middle will be recognized as an adaptation of a stanza in *In Memoriam*.

“ By Jove, I will ; he was my father's friend ! ” Thus Dr. Furnivall, in choice blank verse, replied when he was asked by Mr. Sweet (Sweet of the pointed and envenomed pen, wherewith he pricks the men who not elect him a Professor, as he ought to be), 'twas thus, we say, that Furnivall replied to the bold question asked by bitter Sweet. “ And what that question ? ” Briefly, it was this — “ Why do not you, who start so many things, Societies for poets live and dead, why do not you a new communion found—Shelley Society might be the name—where men might worry over Shelley's bones ? ” “ By Jove, I will ; he was my father's friend,” said Furnivall ; and lo, the thing was done ! Then, the fresh victim to “ inaugurate ”,

they called upon the Reverend Stopford Brooke, who, being well disposed to them, arose, and did address them in majestic phrase, "Forewords", as they are styled by Furnivall, by Jove, for Shelley was his father's friend. "A thoughtful and most temperate address" was Stopford Brooke's, who, as we learn with grief from the reporter of this merry fit, "knocked Mr. Matthew Arnold out of time."

' Oh, somewhere, meek, unconscious Matt,  
That sit'st below Teutonic limes,  
Somewhere thou'lt read it i' the *Times*,  
How Stopford Brooke has knocked thee flat!

' Then, to the joy of the assembled host, to them arose intrepid Furnivall (young Mr. Shelley was his father's friend), and proved that Matthew is a Philistine! Oh, tell it not in Gath; oh, tell it not where men do congregate in Ascalon, that Mr. Arnold tarries in their tents, disguised, and worships Dagon e'en as they. Such is the view of Dr. Furnivall. Then anecdotes of Shelley were brought forth—old anecdotes, and such as Captain Sumph was wont to tell of Byron and the Priest, who grieved that he was "not a family man". This was the bravest of the anecdotes, how Shelley at the elder Furnivall's (for Shelley was the Doctor's father's friend) was asked one day, at tea, "What he would take?" And what took Shelley but a dish of milk (it seems he did not like it in a cup)—a dish of milk, and, butterless, a crust. Such was the food of this superior mind, such the tradition and the influence that shaped the soul of Dr. Furnivall. What more? Why not so much as we might hope; but Mr. Brooke—the Reverend Stopford Brooke, he who in our religion finds romance—declared that Shelley was the poet-priest of what he calls "the modern Meliorism". What that may be we know not; but 'tis thought to be a kind of pious Socialism, to be a dallying with dynamite, with Mr. Hyndman and the other gents who lead a mob along the streets and break the windows, and who scare the little girls. Then these weird figures went their several ways, all the Society of Shelleyites. Much have they added to the public stock of information about Shelley's ways; much, very much, it helps us to enjoy the *Adonais*

and *Alastor*, too, *Prometheus* and *Epipsychidion*. Oh, happy Shelley! Happy in thy friends, and happy in the culminating chance when Mr. Sweet inquired of Furnivall why he should so neglect so great a bard, for Shelley was the Doctor's father's friend.'

Later I came to know Lang personally: not well, but well enough to receive a number of unsolicited letters from him and one day to go with him to Lord's. We sat on one of the front benches of the Pavilion. He wore an ancient top hat, which he tilted over his eyes, stretched his legs on the seat in front and talked all the while; but I had no notion of what he was saying, partly because of his careless utterance and partly because I was watching the game. Cricket demands concentration. He had a voice that did not carry—'roupy' he himself called it—and he did something to his words too: bit them, I think, so that most of them were lost.

I continually regret that there is no selection of Lang's letters. A great many are in existence, all true to type; and although the task of deciphering them would be arduous, it could be done. A varied, learned and very live and amusing book would be the result.

Next to Lang, and far more of a mental stimulus, came Matthew Arnold, whose appeal was double, for I found his poetry more to my mind than that of any other modern, and was swayed by his prose. Principally I wanted prose and, for I had given up reading novels, what I wanted in prose was a 'criticism of life'. Matthew Arnold said that criticism of life was the province of the poet, but I preferred to find it in prose, and nowhere did I find it more acceptably than in his own books. I rejoiced in his irony, his clear sight, his melancholy, his contempt, his despair, and the clarity of his sentences. And he was so responsible for his words, as an author should be. I read everything he wrote, from *Friendship's Garland*, with its deadly banter, to the lectures on translating Homer, which, even though I knew no Greek, enthralled me. *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible* have by their titles probably scared many a



young reader away ; but let the young reader take heart ; they are full of fun, Matthew Arnold's fun, which is a very special kind.

Never shall I forget the day—a Monday in 1888—when the news came that Matthew Arnold was dead ; for only a few hours before I had been reading his last article, printed in the *Nineteenth Century* for the same month, entitled ' Civilization in the United States ', which (though, very magnanimously, it has been published in America), has never been re-issued in book form here. Never, it seemed to me, was he so wise or so spritely. It is in this article, which I read again the other day and found just as trenchant and timely as on its first appearance, that he made the often-quoted remark that every nation has the newspapers which it deserves.

Arnold died suddenly, after jumping a little gate on his way back from church, where he had been listening to a sermon by the Rev. John Watson, known to readers of Scotch stories as ' Ian Maclaren '.

After Arnold, who was less imitable than any of my favourites, I had done with models, although I must confess that Whistler's *Ten O'Clock*, which in 1888 was issued at a shilling in a brown paper wrapper, fascinated me, and I can still finish from memory many of its sentences if given the opening words. That, I thought—and still think—was the way to write ! At any rate, one of the ways. You may imagine with what eagerness, after reading the passage about the river at Chelsea after dark, I looked forward to my next visit to London to see it with my own eyes.

I don't say that even now I do not pause sometimes in my reading to say to myself, ' I wish I had written that ' —I have said it with a book by Lytton Strachey in my hands, I have said it when rejoicing in the gay fluidity of A. A. Milne's prose—but I have grown to learn so well that to write like another is as impossible as it would be wrong.

Let me return to the authors whom I knew, either by sight or even to have the honour of addressing. Alfred

de Keyser and poor little Miss Nelly did not really count ; for although they had reached print they had not reached title-pages, and it is title-pages that make the author. Among my early friends at Brighton was a watchmaker in the Lanes, who had drifted into picture dealing—a vain, idle, talkative man with a warm heart, who wore his hair long and his collar open because poets were like that, and, from his shop door, for the same reason, kissed his hand to all the pretty girls that passed. He had some luck at the local sales—Brighton being famous for artistic *trouvailles*—among the pictures that passed through his hands being a portrait by Reynolds of Frank, Dr. Johnson's black servant, and a Constable, bought for a few shillings, which fetched three hundred pounds at Christie's. He was forty years older than I, but we got on very well. In fact, at that time, almost all the associates I could choose were my seniors.

Well, one day I found in his shop a tall man with a beard and spectacles and an American accent, who turned out to be none other than Charles Godfrey Leland, known to me as the author of the Hans Breitmann ballads, which my uncle was always quoting—

‘ Hans Breitmann gave a barty—  
Where is that barty now ? ’

and

‘ Der maiden mid nodings on ’,

some of which (thanks to my *World of Wit and Humour*) I also knew by heart. Leland was staying at the Norfolk Hotel for a few days, little expecting to meet in the Lanes a boy of seventeen or so who could repeat anything from his broken-German epic. But he cannot have been so thrilled as I, and it was with a real sense of superiority that I sat down to write to my uncle, telling him all about it and triumphing in the advantage I now had over him through this actual meeting.

Leland and I had a long talk and afterwards he sent me very friendly letters, which, later, when I came to his trans-

lation of Heine, made me the more ready to revel in that work. But for Leland, I suppose thousands of English readers would know nothing of 'Florentine Nights' and 'The Baths of Lucca'.

It was another Brighton dealer, but this time a bookseller, also with a shop in the Lanes (which are, so to speak, the Beauchamp Place of that town), who introduced me to Heine's great forerunner, Voltaire, lending me a translation of *The Philosophy of History*, with Leigh Hunt's name on the title-page.

My second author to speak with I owed more directly to my uncle. This was J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, the Shakespearean investigator and collector, who had bought a hill-side near Brighton, called Hollingbury Copse, where he lived in a spreading house composed of separate bungalow rooms united by passages. He was then about sixty, a big man with a white beard. For some reason my uncle had to see him, and I went too. Considering that we called on a Sunday morning, which in my own case is the best morning for work in the whole week and not to be broken in upon by any stranger, and considering also that our host enjoyed a reputation for, if not ferocity, certainly independence, I think we were very well received. He showed us many rare books and documents, but what I chiefly remember of this meeting is his remark that if he ever chanced to see anything in anyone else's house or in a museum that he thought he was more worthy to possess, and (obviously) more able to protect, than its owner, he had no scruples about taking it. This may have been a humorous and idle boast; but he said it.

Whether Brighton is still the abode of literary men, I cannot say. The only one I know who lives there to-day is the author of *The Guarded Flame* and many other powerful novels, W. B. Maxwell, who is a proof that the gift of inventing good stories and writing them with very acceptable skill can be inherited, for his mother, before she married, was Miss Braddon, author of *Lady Audley's Secret*.

Leland and Halliwell-Phillips thus stand as the first

authors with whom I had any speech. But the first author whom I knew well as a contemporary of my own, was Edward Garnett: a doubly divine person, for not only had he written, but, as literary adviser to the firm of Fisher Unwin, he could make reputations for others, or take steps to delay them. Garnett, whose first book was *The Paradox Club*, 1888, had married Constance Black, the sister of my architect cousin's partner, and it was at the settlement in the Weald of Sussex, three or four miles north of the Downs, where they spent every week-end, that we used to meet. In those days Constance Garnett had not yet turned to Russian literature; her interest in Turgenev and Tolstoi, in Dostoievsky and Tchekov came later, through Stepniak, her neighbour and mine at Crockham Hill in Kent; and it is fortunate indeed that it did, for otherwise English readers would not have her superbly lucid and sympathetic translations of those authors.

Edward Garnett, hardly less enthusiastic but now gray, is still a literary adviser—the most inspired and inspiring of all those powers-behind-the-throne of my time—having been content to discover and stimulate others rather than to write much himself. Meanwhile his son David has made a name as a satirical fabulist with a style as pure as Defoe's, while his older brother, Robert (who died in 1932), after pretending for many years to be nothing but a family lawyer with a private passion for Alexandre Dumas, emerged into the warm air of an Indian summer as a bookman with the widest possible net and as a very entertaining autobiographer.

Of the work of the paternal Garnett—the erudite and untiringly kindly Dr. Garnett of the British Museum Reading Room—I shall speak later. May I live long enough to see what the fourth generation will do!

## CHAPTER III

### A BRIGHTON JOURNALIST

A mixed library—Early Verse—Shakespeare looks ahead—First appearance in print—Visions of fortune—A Quaker convention—Neville Figgis—James Knowles—Oscar Wilde and a false ascription—William Watson—Robbie Ross—A quarrel—The Colvins—Hugh Walpole's tribute—The *Sussex Daily News*—Vincent Brown—Mr. Gladstone—Political Oratory—A House in disorder—*The Hawarden Horace*—'Ad Dorotheam'—My first book—Julia Neilson—Beerbohm Tree—*Little Red Riding Hood*—J. L. Toole

EXCEPT for school terms elsewhere, I was destined to be a Brightonian for more than twenty years, for when at last, just after my sixteenth birthday, a broken scholastic career, which included nine schools of varying merit, came to an end, I was apprenticed to a Brighton bookseller and thus lost the years in which the ordinary youth has most fun and learns most. And when I had finished with that, I spent two years more gaining experience as a member of the staff of the *Sussex Daily News*, a Brighton paper.

The book-shop had a circulating library with an enormous stock of works no longer in circulation, many of them dating from the eighteenth century, so that I was able to make explorations in reading not easy for ordinary boys, while the work later, on the *Sussex Daily News*, taught me to keep my thoughts in easily accessible pigeon-holes ; but I used to look with envy on those contemporaries who were still at good schools or at the University, with playing fields at their service. Nor did it decrease my dissatisfaction to have to be, as part of my regular duty, every day at noon in the porter's lodge of Brighton College

to see what new guides to knowledge the young barbarians were needing.

Most of all do I now regret the loss of a classical education. The world no doubt is the best or most serviceable schoolmaster ; but the world's curriculum does not include Latin and Greek. If it were any consolation, I would remind myself that Frederick the Great and Cecil Rhodes were equally without the dead languages ; but it is not.

Although during that apprenticeship I spent most of my spare time, and some of my employer's, in reading, I was trying to write too, always verse. I seem to have written no prose before I was twenty-one. The productions of these early years are collected in three or four manuscript books, one of which, *Verrallana*, 1888, begins with the following appeal to the reviewer :

' Were I to seek publicity in print  
 The Critic's heart I'd soften, if I could,  
 (" The Critic's heart," say I ? The Critic's flint)  
 With this decree of Arnold's gentle Budh :<sup>1</sup>  
 " Kill not, for Pity's sake, and lest ye slay  
 The meanest thing upon its upward way."

The verses are all very serious. No love poems, but plenty of polemics and inquiries into the anomalies of life, with anxious views on the next world. In fact, a sceptic's commentary.

I seem very early to have doubted and denied. In fact all my life I have been without belief in any guiding purpose behind the veil and with too quick a consciousness of the world's inequality, injustice, cruelty and of the waste and frustration that are continually evident. This is why almost all my writing has been concerned with the pleasant things, and why I have laid so much emphasis on what I found to be beautiful or worthy of honour. Perhaps I was thus concentrating for fear that I might weep.

Anyway, one cannot be a reformer without being very

<sup>1</sup> *The Light of Asia*, by Edwin Arnold.

sure of oneself and accepting the possibility of improvement. Again, reformers need to see things as black and white, and to my eyes they are a mixture of shades. All my life I have been handicapped as a debater or controversialist or condemner by finding myself to too large a degree ranged also on the other side.

I quote a little from these early callow pages here and there in this book, at this point contenting myself with what strikes me now as the only original idea (in *More Verrallana*, 1888): a monologue by the youthful Shakespeare called 'Looking Ahead'. The Bard of Avon is discovered, a mere stripling, reclining in a meadow near Stratford. He muses thus:

'The writing fever bows me down.  
 I long to cover reams and reams.  
 The sun of genius shines on me  
 And bathes me in his glorious beams.

I long to benefit the world,  
 I long to gain immortal fame,  
 Confer some blessings on my race  
 And win myself a deathless name.

If I can give our English stage  
 Some plays depicting human life  
 That will in future years become  
 The cause of trans-Atlantic strife . . .

If I can set a million pens  
 Discoursing of my wondrous powers  
 And finding flowers where I sow weeds  
 And finding weeds where I sow flowers ;

In each reprint of any play  
 If I can so distort the text  
 By printer's errors, that it reads  
 Quite differently in the next,

And introduce some ancient slang,  
 (I never did know how to spell)  
 To bother Aldis Wright and Skeat,  
 And Furnivall, and Halliwell . . .

If I can add a phrase or two  
 To leader writers' stock-in-trade ;  
 If I can help an orator  
 Enforce a point that he has made ;  
 If I can do all this, why then  
 My labours will be well repaid.'

Now and then I succeeded in inducing the Editors of the local papers to accept something ; but the most memorable moment of my life arrived when at last the *Globe* printed me—the *Globe*, a famous London evening paper. Here it is, written during the Home Rule excitement in the late eighteen-eighties :

#### THE POLITICAL PROPHET

Near me home in Tipperary lives a prophet—old and hairy,  
 And, begorra ! all his clothes are torn to rags ;  
 Not a pig that's born would grovel in the miserable hovel  
 Which he's built wid sticks and mud among the crags.  
 Well, we made a little party, did the bhoys from Ballincarty—

We're the finest politicians in the South—  
 And we got his honour's permit, and we called upon the  
 hermit,

Faith ! we found him wid a bottle to his mouth.

Then says Tim (he did the spakin'), ' Praise your Riverence  
 we're sakin'

For to know the future of this glorious land.'

Says the prophet, ' I can tell ye, but ye'll have to fill me belly  
 Wid the craytur. 'Tis John Jamieson, me brand !'

Och ! our pockets wasn't heavy, but we made a little levy

And Tim handed to the hermit one and six :

Says he, in voice of thunder, ' I'll be took up sure for  
 plunder

Can't ye raise another shillin' ? This is nix !

' No ? Then hark, ye men of larnin', for I hear me eyeballs  
 barnin'

The troubles of me counthry claim me powers ;  
 I feel me jaynius radiate, we'll have Home Rule immaydiate,  
 And Liberty and Freedom will be ours !



## 54 READING, WRITING AND REMEMBERING

I prophesy for Parnell a heavenly throne eternal,  
 And an earthly throne as Oireland's noble king ;  
 And the Pathriot O'Brien will give speeches from Mount  
 Zion,  
 While on earth he'll make the Dublin rafthers ring !

' The divine immortal Biggar, wid his fine majestic figure,  
 Will be ginerall of our Army—or I lie ;  
 The speaker will be Tanner—that man of polished manner ;  
 Tim Healy will be Chancellor—or die !  
 We'll slit the Orange wizens, and we'll shut up all the  
 prisons,  
 And whisky will be common as the sea—  
 Och ! we'll cut off all connection wid the thrice accursed  
 Saxon,  
 And wake it in one everlasting spree !

' To complete the undertakin', up in Heaven they'll soon  
 be makin'  
 Alterations in the list of Pathron Saints :  
 Misther Gladstone will—above us—take Saint Pathrick's  
 place, and love us,  
 And hark to Paddy's blessings—and complaints !'  
 Then says Tim, ' Wid all these glories, Faith, you're leaving  
 out the Tories.'  
 Says the prophet, ' For their dirthy, scurvy tricks,  
 They will suffer dreadful tarments, and wid'out their lower  
 garments—  
 By the Pope ! I can't do more for one and six.'

We left the sage, so gifted, wid his elbow slightly lifted ;  
 ' Och ! Tim, me bhoy,' says I, ' can this be thue ? '  
 ' Ye'll be mad,' says he, ' I'm thinkin', it's as rale and  
 thue as drinkin',  
 And, 'pon me sowl, that ought to settle you ! '  
 Our hearts were feelin' frisky, wid the thoughts of so much  
 whisky,  
 All night we danced and yelled, and played the fool ;  
 For we're plaised as Punch and merry, down in county  
 Tipperary,  
 Now the prophet says we're goin' to get Home Rule !

The local papers did not pay, but the *Globe* sent me a postal order for fifteen shillings for these verses, and reading them again to-day, I can't think that they were dear. At the time, however, I thought the reward wonderful. Without being in the least mercenary or acquisitive, never can one know again such rapture as accompanies the opening of the envelope containing the first payment for literary work. But my own share of ecstasy was double, for I had already had the almost unbearable joy of finding the verses on the front page of the *Globe* in the 'By the way' column; a column which, as Dame Fortune was secretly arranging, I was in the not very distant future to write very largely myself. It was almost too much: first the verses in actual print, and then the money for them. Lucky that I had a strong heart.

Naturally I continued to send verses to the *Globe* ('Fifteen shillings a week: let me see, that's £39 a year' was how my thoughts were running), but they were more often rejected than not. Still, all unconsciously, I had laid a foundation-stone.

I will quote no more from those early days until I come to mention my first book, which was now in the making, except these stanzas from a private commentary on the decision of the Quaker hierarchy, at a summer gathering at Scarborough, to let the prophet Jonah's most famous escapade go. I have not the exact date, but assume it to have been about the time of which I am writing. Although not then much identified with the sect, I seem to have known what was going on. Hence these lines:

To Scarboro' the Quakers went  
Intent on disputation  
Provided only it was blent  
Enough with recreation:  
For Yorkshire's coast is very fine  
For junketings and rambles,  
And some one ought to draw the line  
At minor prophets' gambols. . . .

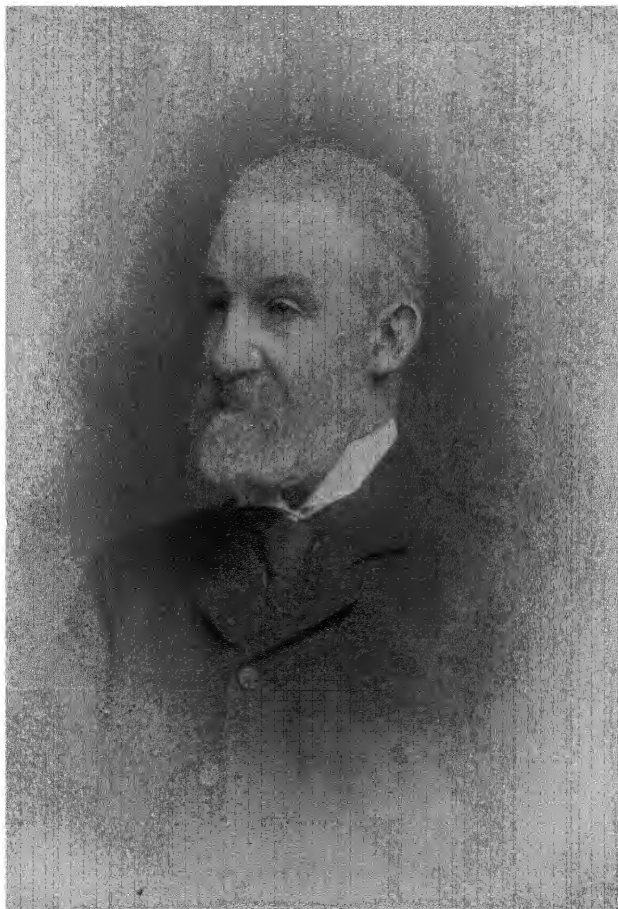
And so poor Jonah went, his tale  
 Transformed to Allegory,  
 For look! Apartments in a whale  
 Is too grotesque a story!  
 While Job is also out of touch,  
 The Summer School has said it,  
 Alas! that one who bore so much  
 Has now to bear discredit!

But as for us who did not fare  
 To Scarboro', nor wish to,  
 Who from the first have had a care  
 For Jonah and his fish too,  
 To us it seems that Quakers might  
 Be doing something better  
 Than joining with the ranks that smite  
 In battles o'er the letter.

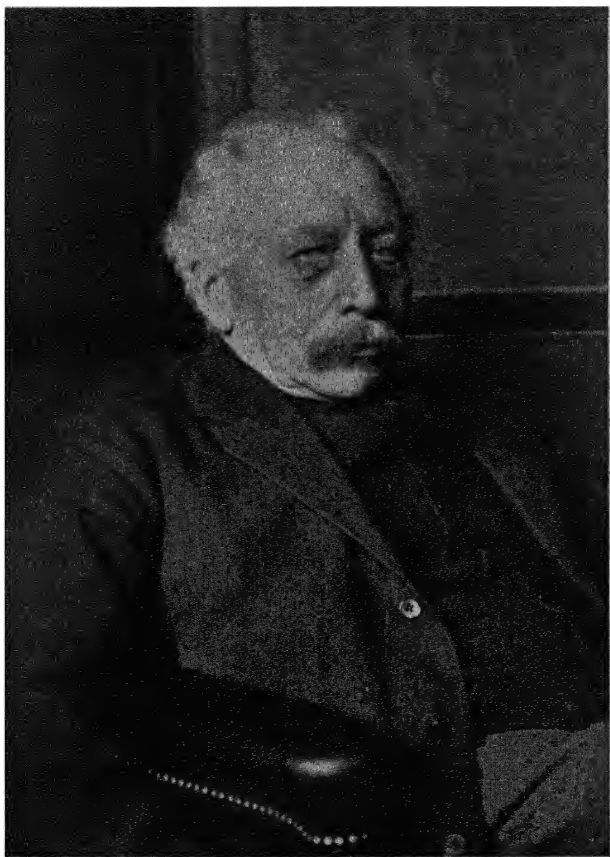
The Spirit once was their concern,  
 'Twas Fox's inspiration  
 (Though Fox maybe ne'er lived to burn  
 In righteous exaltation)—  
 Strong simple souls, they did not rove  
 In problematic chatter  
 But went direct to God for love  
 And deemed naught else could matter.

But lo! the Bible is in crime  
 To-day by Friends detected,  
 And Jonah for the second time  
 Is, so to speak, 'rejected'.  
 And O the pity of it! for  
 While critics hack and sever  
 The outstretched hand of Christ is more  
 Desired by man than ever.

One recollection of those early Brighton days is concerned, obliquely, with Oscar Wilde and the odd manner in which I became acquainted with his writings. In January 1889 I chanced to meet a youth, who later was to distinguish himself as a historian—John Neville Figgis,



W. J. CRAIG



WILLIAM BATESON

whose father was minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel in the town, and who, as the author of daring and satirical verses, displayed the brilliance that we associate with the rebellious sons of the clergy. After surprising me by taking orders and forswearing the world, he died—a loss to learning—in middle age, but not before he had acquired as much erudition, bulk and untidiness as Dr. Johnson himself, whom he resembled, to my eyes, far more than Mr. Chesterton is supposed to do. His end was accelerated by being torpedoed during the War on his way to America to lecture. No less likely fate for this studious cloistered theological inquirer could be imagined. Although Figgis was saved from drowning, his health and nerves were shattered. His incomplete work on Bossuet went down with the ship.

But to return to Oscar Wilde—on the evening on which I met young Figgis, who was then about twenty, he had come fresh from reading in the *Nineteenth Century* Wilde's essay on 'The Decay of the Art of Lying', and, without a misplaced or omitted word, he repeated large portions of this to the company. The result of a single perusal. The stories of Macaulay's similar feats of memory I had until then thought to be exaggerations; but I can testify that Figgis had the same astonishing gift.

The *Nineteenth Century* always had something arresting in those days. So had the *Fortnightly* and the *Contemporary*. They have all lost authority, one reason being that the ordinary newspapers now find room for the kind of article which James Knowles, the founder of the *Nineteenth Century*, was always seeking.

I met Knowles, who was Maurice Hewlett's uncle, once, but had little conversation with him, as he was always an editor and there were present some real fish for his net. Before he became an editor he was an architect, and he had designed a vast number of buildings of all kinds, from churches to clubs, from offices to the terrace that is now Princes' Hotel at Hove. London's chief debt of gratitude to him is for Leicester Square. In 1873 Leicester Square

was a piece of waste ground full of rubbish. When 'Baron' Grant bought it as a gift to the public he employed Knowles to make it seemly.

The *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, strictly anonymous in those days, also carried big guns; but one is now no more. Taste has changed. I remember that my first glimpse of real magnificence, or reckless prodigality, was when, asked by a colleague on the *Globe* to dine and sleep at his cottage on the Epsom Downs, he bought at the Victoria bookstall the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly*, the *Contemporary* and several magazines and illustrated weeklies, in order that I might have 'something to read in the train'. That seemed to me, who would have been satisfied with one evening paper, princely. I never made such lavishness my own, but when I was told that a certain hostess always took sixteen copies of *The Times* and sixteen copies of the *Pall Mall Gazette* so that her guests should have one each, I decided that if ever I entertained on a similar scale I would do the same.

That was in the time of Harry Cust's editorship of the *Pall Mall*, when there was something amusing or startling every afternoon, as sure as sunset, and the 'Wares of Autolycus' ran through the week. I forget Mrs. Meynell's day. Was it Wednesday? And was it on Fridays that Mrs. Pennell was greedy? Poor Harry Cust—even to those who, like myself, knew him only very slightly, how gay and charming he was! It was he, with his bulldog Lobengula at his side, who wrote the most caustic and sensational of the leaders and found comic titles for them. 'Périer Joué' was one of these, when Casimir Périer, the French President, resigned; another, when he could think of nothing else, was 'The Coisoned Pup'.

Oscar Wilde, by the way, like Sydney Smith before him, has the credit for more jokes than he made. Not long ago I had to listen to a fellow guest who was regaling the table with one of Wilde's best *impromptu* comments. The scene was a meeting of the Vagabonds' Club, a dining

society which flourished in London in the 'nineties. On the occasion in question, eating having finished, there were speeches, and among those who spoke was the representative of the *Star*—'The *Star* man', as he was called—who, the chairman said, had expressed his readiness to tell a few stories. Having told three or four, each totally unfit for mixed company, with great success, he stood for a few moments in silence while he searched his memory for another and, if possible, a worse. It was then, said the narrator, that Wilde was heard to remark, in a loud whisper, 'The *Star* is lost in the illimitable blue'. Very good, and in Wilde's own manner; but as a matter of fact it was not Wilde who said it. The remark was made by William Watson, the poet, as I can testify—for I was next but one to him, and was the more struck by it, and therefore the more likely to remember it, because, knowing his work, I had not thought of him as that kind of wit.

Although I did not know Wilde, I came to know and like his loyal and devoted friend, Robbie Ross, intimately, and enjoyed his impish talk to the full. But we had a difference which lasted for some time, during which he said, I am sure, the cruellest things about me that his brain could devise, for, being so true a friend, he was naturally a first-class hater. The fault was, I fear, too much mine. In planning an anthology of letters I asked Robbie if I might include two or three of Wilde's, which he had shown me in typescript but which had not yet been published; and he agreed. I was also using a number of Stevenson's, and when one day—very foolishly, as it turned out—I mentioned those of Wilde to Lady Colvin, she said that if he was represented in the book, those from R. L. S. to her husband or herself must come out. Weighing the respective merits of the letters in question, I decided, rightly or wrongly, to omit Wilde's; but what was beyond doubt wrong was my neglect to tell Ross, so that the first intimation came to him when he opened the published book. Naturally he was furious. Further, he demanded the



reason for the omission, and when I declined to give it he was more furious still.

The story would not be worth telling but for the sequel. It was through Colvin that, all unknown to Ross, we quarrelled; it was through Colvin that we became reconciled; for when, at the time of Colvin's retirement from the Print Room at the statutory age of sixty-five, the project was set on foot to give him a public dinner, both Robbie and I were on the Committee, and in the course of the discussions we gradually returned to our old footing. But I never told him what had happened.

Colvin and Ross, though unlike in every other way, had in common their fidelity to a cause: Ross to Wilde, and Colvin to Stevenson, or, as he used to call him, having some trouble with the letter R, 'Ah welless'. And neither Colvin nor Ross ever, as one can conceive of devotees, in course of time, doing, grew to think less of their human idols or to resent their own fame being merged in the greater. Ross, it is true, did little work apart from that which falls to the champion of another, although he had some very good brains of his own and liked writing about pictures; but Colvin as Keeper of the Print Room at the British Museum issued some valuable critical works, and wrote what is, I believe, still the standard *Life of Keats*, although Amy Lowell's researches may have superseded it here and there. At the time when he lost his power of concentration he was engaged on a learned essay on the Centaurs.

Colvin had his pet aversions and some professorial weaknesses which made him vulnerable to the ribald; but he was tireless in service to his friends, and beneath a certain stiffness of manner had a very cordial nature. He flung himself into the fortunes of Conrad with passion, and no one could have done more than he and Mrs. Sitwell, as Lady Colvin then was, when Stephen Phillips was making good.

It was at Stephen Gwynn's house in Chelsea that I met one afternoon a little white-haired lady in a large hat and a feather boa, with a large nose and very soft eyes, who I

discovered was none other than Mrs. Sitwell, the famous Mrs. Sitwell who had acted as muse to R. L. Stevenson in his early London days and had drawn from him some of his most emotional letters. At the time when we met, at the beginning of this century, all London knew that Sidney Colvin, Stevenson's friend and biographer, and Mrs. Sitwell were in love, but that they could not marry so long as Colvin's mother survived, as every spare penny of his income was needed by her. They saw each other every day and, at the little dinner-parties which Colvin occasionally gave in his bleak official residence at the British Museum, Mrs. Sitwell acted as hostess. Later, after their marriage in 1903, when, on his retirement from the Museum, they moved to a house off the Bayswater Road, I was a regular visitor, ultimately becoming, with Laurence Binyon, Colvin's literary executor and writing a record of their lives.

With Lady Colvin there always had to be a young lion to nourish—that necessity was of the essence of her warm romantic heart—and nothing gave her greater satisfaction than to receive confidences from the unhappy and pour balm into their wounds. Her sympathies were boundless, and to the end she kept in touch with new books : always, I think, in the hope of getting also in touch with their authors, should they make a sign.

One of Lady Colvin's most constant protégés being Hugh Walpole, I should like to quote here some passages from the subtle and discerning character sketch of her which he wrote for my memoir of her and of her husband.

' It was one of the great pieces of good fortune in my life that the Colvins were among my first friends in London. The customary phrase to use about people who during their lifetime were very popular is that they had a genius for friendship ; it is a term more misused than almost any other, but for once it must be said. Friendship isn't an easy habit in these hurried noisy days ; and to have many friends, to give each one an individual colour so that not only do you seem to be dealing with them as though they

were unique in your life but you do actually make them unique, this is a gift of the rarest and most precious. It was the supreme gift that the Colvins possessed.

'They were fortunate, I think, in being perfect complements the one of the other; they were alike in their enthusiasm and generosity of heart, and their passionate mutual love gave them a beautiful unity, but they were quite separate in their approach to life. Colvin was traditional; it is well known of course that he was always on the look-cut for new talent in art and letters; but what he liked was a new talent with old roots, and in the conduct of life he was all for the traditions, perfect courtesy, an unflinching code of honour, decent manners and a certain avoidance of the crudities that modern life seemed to him to be too fond of emphasizing.

'Lady Colvin was with him in her love for fine courtesies and honourable dealing, but beyond these she had a deep understanding of all the complexities of modern life; you could not tell Colvin everything, because to shock him was to hurt him too deeply; but there was nothing that you could not tell to her.

'She was not at all the sweet, gentle white-haired old lady. With her passionate interest in everything, her fiery partisanship, as she sat there in her chair, the inevitable feather boa round her neck like a banner, the most exciting thing in life seemed always just to have happened to her. The astonishing thing was that the exciting event, when you came to hear of it, was something that had occurred to someone else rather than to herself. We all know that we spend most of our days in listening to the adventures of our friends and longing for the moment to arrive when we shall be able to slip in a word of our own affairs; but in her case she joined so eagerly in the experiences of other people that you were amazed that she had time or energy left for her own. She was a terrible trap for egoists, and yet always after you had told her of your own adventure you caught from her a sense of the excitement of other people's and that did your egoism good.'

As a member of the staff of the *Sussex Daily News*, I had to be prepared at a moment's notice to be sent anywhere—

to police courts, inquests, theatres, charity meetings, music-halls, flower-shows, meets of hounds, shipwrecks, weddings, funerals, concerts, entertainments, billiard matches—everything, in short, where shorthand, which I never learned, was not essential. In my spare time at the office I wrote paragraphs, criticisms, descriptive articles and reviews of books. The quality of the work may have been low, but the practice was useful, and every day I spent less time in getting ready to begin.

For two years I led this strange hand-to-mouth existence—in exchange not for a salary but for pocket-money—beginning each morning at eleven, when I had to be in the Hove Police Court, and ending between 2 and 3 a.m., when the paper went to bed. Apart from the useful training acquired, I value those two years for the companionship of the only other non-shorthand writer on the staff, Vincent Brown (who died early in 1933), a fine critic of literature, a fearless talker and the author of some powerful novels of peasant life, all on the tragic side but filled with pity and understanding. *My Brother* was perhaps his best work. Brown's greatest literary heroes, Thomas Hardy and Dostoevsky, soon became also mine.

An early instance of the choice of words—how one epithet can be better than another—occurred during one of my assignments (as the American journalistic stories say), while I was on the Brighton paper. Buffalo Bill brought his Wild West Show to the town, and his advertising representative, Major Burke, who also had a wide felt hat and long shining locks, invited the press to his tent, where whisky was not inconspicuous. In the course of conversation, I remarked that there would naturally be a procession. He was shocked and even pained. 'Young man,' he said, 'ours is not a pro-cession; ours is a cavalcade.'

One of the star attractions, by the way, at that show was Annie Oakley, the sharp-shooter, otherwise known as 'Little Sure Shot', and I mention her here because, in addition to her astonishing accuracy with a repeating

rifle, she has added a phrase to the language—at any rate to the American language. One of her tricks was to cut out the pips on a playing card. Well, at all circuses in America to-day, and also at many theatres, the passes, since they are punctured, are called ‘Annie Oakleys’.

Between leaving the book-shop and joining the newspaper I had had three or four months holiday, in the late summer of 1889, and I was fortunate to be given by another uncle, who owned ships, a passage in a tramp steamer from Venice to Cardiff, by way of Trieste, Fiume and Bordeaux. Records of travel are not part of the scheme of this book; and I mention the trip because, while travelling to Venice overland, I had in Paris my first glimpse of Mr. Gladstone, for he was present at the Hippodrome, now the great Gaumont film building, at a performance of a vast spectacle called ‘Skobeleff’ and I can still visualize the eagerness which, when the manager came to his box, the G.O.M. displayed in putting questions, probably technical, and discussing the replies.

It was at Hastings, in 1891, that I saw him again, when, at the age of eighty-two, he was on the war-path for Irish Home Rule, addressing in the theatre a great gathering of supporters, and I was at the reporters’ desk which had been fitted up in the orchestra. The G.O.M., although still a warrior, was visibly failing. His eye had lost its brightness and his features their aggressive decision; the resonance had left his voice, and I never saw a face so white. By his side sat Mrs. Gladstone, anxiously watching her marvellous lord.

Seymour Hicks was telling me the other day that, on a recent visit to Paris he asked Sacha Guitry for news of Le Bargy. Was he still alive? Oh yes, said Guitry, he was still alive: ‘a hold lion, very hold’. Well, Mr. Gladstone, at the time of this speech at Hastings, was a hold lion, very hold; and he was also a hold heagle. I don’t know which of those two heads, the king of beast’s or the king of bird’s, his physiognomy more resembled. Tenniel drew him as both.

While doubting if any politician is ever worth hearing, I am convinced that we should never make our first acquaintance with a famous orator when his age is eighty-two. Much as I admired him, and much as I was still under the domestic Gladstone glamour in which I had been trained, I wished that he had given it all up and was instead taking it easy on the sofa at Hawarden, translating Horace and Homer or reading theological novels. What a profound belief in his cause or himself (I reflected) a political speaker must have ; what a contempt for his hearers ; or what colossal vanity, to be, after eighty, still campaigning, still employing the old rhetorical devices and gestures : in a word, tricks !

I have heard all the principal orators of my time, but never without blushing for them. Not even the best of them has been above recourse to pettiness. Mr. Gladstone was the most illustrious, and, by reason of his age, the most pathetic, the most to be pitied ; especially as I couldn't make up my mind as to whether he cared most for Ireland or for the arena. When one is a great orator—that is to say, an artist in exposition, in persuasion and in denunciation—one has the right to be as unwilling to lay down one's tongue, so to speak, as a writer to lay down his pen or an artist his brush. All the same, I was not thrilled at last to be face to face with the god ; I was pained.

Of course I heard Gladstone too late. In his prime he must have been a great power, playing as he liked on his audiences : at any rate when they were—as great orators' audiences too often are—'packed' and he was preaching only to his own congregation.

Among the famous speakers of my time, the most accomplished, I should say, was Mr. Asquith, afterwards Lord Oxford. No one else, not reading from notes, was so clear, concise and orderly. He had a masterly choice of words, and so well organized was his brain that they were always in the right place, the end of the sentence—indeed, the end of the speech itself, no matter how distant—never lost

sight of, and reached by logical and unalterable stages. But Mr. Asquith was in the old tradition of deference and courtesy. He 'ventured to think', he 'made so bold as to assert', and so forth. These clichés always rather cooled my ardour. I prefer directness.

I would say of him that he gave the reporters less work in making him grammatical and fluent than any other speaker. There was no need to join his flats; they were joined. But the discrepancy between the original speech and the newspaper reporters is often extraordinary, as is only too well known by professional journalists and by those who have listened to debates in Parliament. The way in which the practised reporter reduces Parliamentary chaos to order is indeed wonderful. At an ordinary public meeting each speaker is alone, and each speaker addresses his audience from the same spot—the platform. And, as there is little or no interruption, the reporter's task is comparatively easy. But in the House the members jump up all over the place, often two or three at once, and speak or mumble—very often just like ordinary casual conversation—amid every kind of movement and distraction.

I shall never forget my surprise, and the sense of shock that accompanied it, when, on my first visit to the Gallery of the House of Commons, I observed what seemed to me the disrespect of the members when even a great leader was speaking. Some were talking; some were walking; some were interjecting comments, often derisive. The result was that I could hear only a little of the Front Bench orators, while amid the hesitating *hums* and *haws* of the rank and file standing up here and there on the floor of the House there was little to be distinguished at all. Yet the next day the *Times* supplied all that I had missed.

The prevailing impression which that first visit conveyed was of the restlessness of the place, crystallizing in lack of dignity. Although I have been there again and again since, this first impression has not been corrected. To hear

great oratory the House of Commons is certainly not the place, even if great oratory is going on. There are too many cheers—and counter cheers. Questions are flung in and must sometimes be answered. The thread is lost and notes must be consulted. Occasionally there are promptings from a colleague. But, above all, there are the members who talk and walk.

To return to Mr. Gladstone, I was destined to be associated with him in a very unexpected way : in fact, to write something of which he was in his late lifetime, and now and then still is, supposed to be the author. It happened that when I went to the *Globe* in the summer of 1893 my most intimate colleague was Charles L. Graves, now assistant editor of *Punch*, but then responsible for the column of jokes and caustic comments called 'By the Way'—one of the most popular features in London journalism at that time. Together we had to fill this column every morning, and, though there were bad days, it was usually great fun. Graves, who of all the journalists I have known has the best stored brain and the highest record for accuracy, and is a remarkable scholar, took advantage of the announcement that the G.O.M. was employing his leisure by making a new translation of Horace, to contribute to the *Spectator*, week by week, his own idea of that work, under the title *The Hawarden Horace*, in which it may safely be said—since Graves was far from being a Home-ruler and has a deadly memory and an undefeatable wit—no chances were missed. I don't mean that the verses—which were the freest paraphrases of, and modernization of, the originals—were malicious ; not at all. But they often hit hard.

Perhaps it was because he thought a little leaven might be useful that he asked me for a version of the ode *Ad Phyllidem*. My Latin is practically non-existent, but, obtaining a crib and imagining myself to be the Grand Old Man and Phyllis to be his little granddaughter Dorothy Drew, upon whom all the world knew that he doted, I produced the following lines :



## AD DOROTHEAM

I know where there is honey in a jar  
 Meet for a certain little friend of mine ;  
 And, Dorothy, I know where daisies are  
 That only wait small hands to intertwine  
 A wreath for such a golden head as thine.

The thought that thou art coming makes all glad :  
 The house is bright with blossoms high and low,  
 And many a little lass and little lad  
 Expectantly are running to and fro :  
 The fire within our hearts is all aglow.

We want thee, child, to share in our delight  
 On this high day, the holiest and best,  
 Because 'twas then, ere youth had taken flight,  
 Thy grandmamma, of women loveliest,  
 Made me of men most honoured and most blest.

That haughty boy who led thee to suppose  
 He was thy sweetheart, has, I grieve to tell,  
 Been seen to pick the garden's choicest rose  
 And toddle with it to another belle,  
 Who does not treat him altogether well.

But mind not that, or let it teach thee this—  
 To waste no love on any youthful rover ;  
 (All youths are rovers, I assure thee, Miss).  
 No, if thou wouldst true constancy discover,  
 Thy grandpapa is perfect as a lover.

So come, thou playmate of my closing day,  
 The latest treasure life can offer me,  
 And with thy baby laughter make us gay.  
 Thy fresh young voice shall sing, my Dorothy,  
 Songs that shall bid the feet of sorrow flee.

When the book, *The Hawarden Horace*, appeared and received a warm welcome, my lines were quoted in several of the reviews. Provincial papers when copying them slurred over the authorship, so that in course of time they used to crop up with Mr. Gladstone's name. Both Graves

and I have had to write a number of letters of explanation, and probably there will still be more, for a newspaper mis-statement, always hard to catch up with, is never completely overtaken.

It was at this time that, indirectly, I received my first literary commission and, directly, my second. The first came through Mr. Teetgen, the Brighton provision merchant, who wanted from Vincent Brown an historical sketch of the town to attach to his price-list. Brown very handsomely recommended me, and I wrote it and was paid. Five pounds ! The first five pounds I ever saw all together. But I have no recollection that the article ever reached print.

The second commission came from my great-aunts, Rachel and Sarah Rickman, who lived at Wellingham, near Lewes, in Sussex, and were the ladies-bountiful of the village of Ringmer. At their invitation I wrote a pamphlet on William Penn and the Springett family—Penn's first wife having been Gulielma Maria Springett—who lived at Broyle Place in that neighbourhood ; and this work did reach print and now and then to-day finds its way into booksellers' catalogues under the heading ' Scarce '. But, as I say elsewhere in these pages, I am very little of a collector's piece.

One day in 1890 I found on a station bookstall a little volume called *Pirated Poems*, in a sixpenny series, which had some excellent things in it. A publisher's note stated that it was a reprint of an anonymous American work, and if the author would come forward he would receive his share of the profits. Having by this time a considerable stock of verse of my own, I made a selection and sent it to the publisher, who, to my astonishment, excitement and misgiving, accepted them, but insisted upon providing a new title, very different from anything that I had chosen or should have chosen, and, I thought, very misleading, and brought them out. I put up some resistance, but it was quickly over-ruled ; indeed the publisher, a very dictatorial man, replied that he didn't mind whether the book came out or not, but it would come out only with his

title ; and so, of course, I climbed down. First books are first books, and the publishers of first books usually get their own way. Moreover, this was to be the eighth in a series which, being designed for 'Everybody', practically sold itself, and already contained *Everybody's Book of Proverbs and Quotations*, *Everybody's Book of Outdoor Games*, *Everybody's Book of Indoor Games*, *Everybody's Book of Irish Wit and Humour*, *Everybody's Book of English Wit and Humour*, *Everybody's Book of Scotch Wit and Humour*, and the *Pirated Poems* which had stirred my ambition. Then I should come—*Sparks from a Flint : odd Rhymes for odd Times*. Cloth sixpence ; leather (limp) one shilling ; morocco or Persian gilt half a crown. Not a bad start !

And then arrived the parcel containing six copies, which I tore open with the proud glow that can suffuse an author once only in his life ; never again, for there cannot be two first books. I did not care for the colour of the cloth (sixpence) or the red edges ; but the words 'Everybody's Series' were heartening. When, however, I opened the book, I found that the perfidious publisher not only had provided the title, but, behind my back, had defended it in a preface.

" 'Sparks from a Flint,' " he wrote, 'is a title, which does not mean that either Author or Publishers claim that the pieces are brilliant, or that the Author has a flint where his heart ought to be—which, by the way, is often true of the Critic and the Reviewer.

'The poet's work is to lead his readers to look at truth in all sorts of ways and from many points of view.

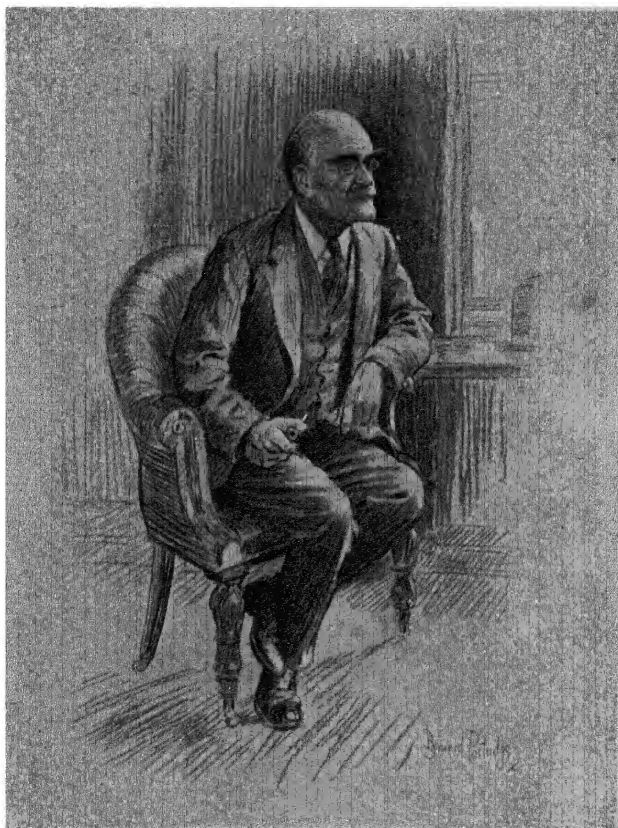
'The author of these verses has come into contact with men who have sometimes assumed a carelessness which was not altogether real, and with others who were honestly heedless ; men who were, and who appeared to be "flints", and among both classes he has found some sparks of truth, which show that there is a heart of flesh beneath the roughest exterior.

'Thus he has gleaned in a field which most men assume to be too barren to attract attention or to repay the labour.



ARNOLD BENNETT

*From the drawing by Sir Bernard Partridge in Punch, April 27, 1927*



RUDYARD KIPLING

*From the drawing by Sir Bernard Partridge in Punch, February 15, 1928*

‘ The result is in the hands of the reader, who will doubtless pass his own verdict thereon.’

To say that this defence depressed me is grossly to understate the case ; I burned with shame ; all my pride in the book evaporated, and, when one of its first readers pointed out two false quantities in it, I lost all interest, did everything I could to conceal its existence, was in an agony when it was mentioned in my presence and, some years later, bought up the whole edition and destroyed it.

Looking at the book now, I find that for a very young man I was unduly sententious ; but not always foolishly, for many a better author might take this plea to heart :

‘ Prolixity, avaunt !  
And I shall get on nicely ;  
For with you here I can’t  
Express myself concisely.

Verbosity, away !  
Digression, cease to trouble !  
You hamper what I say,  
And make my verses double.

But Brevity and Wit,  
Give heed to my petition !  
Control my pen, and it  
Shall win a proud position !’

Here are some expressions of opinion from these distant days. On war :

‘ Then why not let our oldest fight—  
Say, no one under fifty ?  
A country should for future might  
Of her young blood be thrifty !

Or else abolish sword and gun,  
And take to pugilism,  
Or each appoint a champion,  
To settle any schism !’

On profanity :

'The navvy swears because he feels  
Plain language a delusion,  
And so a string of oaths he reels  
In blasphemous profusion.

But what he means by what he says  
'Twill profit none to study,  
For does he blame, or does he praise,  
The thing is always "bloody".

The youngster—for he thinks it quite  
A manly occupation ;  
It adds some inches to his height  
And lends a reputation.

The swell—because, if chosen well,  
An oath gives *ton* and plating ;  
It's grand to send a man to Hell,  
Who only kept you waiting.

The tar—because he's sworn so long,  
And can't get on without it ;  
But whether it is right or wrong,  
He's never thought about it.

While men of wisdom never swear  
Unless a door is slamming,  
Or buttons go, or braces tear ;  
And then, I own, it clears the air  
To do a little damning.'

On marriage :

'And these are the words the philosopher said  
With regard to our nuptial plan :—  
"It's a capital thing for a woman to wed,  
But a shocking bad thing for a man."'

On efficiency :

'Not he who knows his powers alone  
Wins Fortune's ministrations ;  
A better chance is stood by one  
Who knows his limitations.'

On Robert Burns :

' I ken, dear Rob, the human soul  
 A-shining in your pages ;  
 You loved too well the flowing bowl—  
 Not everybody sage is.  
 It tempered your philosophy  
 To do some honest sinning,  
 It broadened, too, your sympathy,  
 And made your verses winning.

I love you for a thorough man,  
 I love you for your teaching,  
 I love you for the rigs you ran,  
 Your hate of cant and preaching.  
 But, Rob, a word within your ear,  
 From one Parnassus climbing :  
 To younger bards it wasna' fair  
 To do such easy rhyming !'

The best verses in the book are objective, embodying the memories of a holiday in the island of Coll in the Hebrides, in 1890, inscribed to my companion there, a doctor who preferred collecting eggs to practising the healing art.

' You may talk of the Island of Wight,  
 The home of the lodging-house shark,  
 Of Alderney's varied delights,  
 Of Jersey and Guernsey and Sark,  
 Of Sheppey and Lundy and Man,  
 Of Scilly and Skye and Tiree,—  
 You may talk of what islands you can,  
 But Coll is the island for me !

O where is the ocean so blue ?  
 And where are the evenings so long ?  
 And where are the people so few ?  
 And where are the mallards so strong ?  
 And where is the water so cold ?  
 And where are the breezes so free ?  
 And where are the black-backs so bold ?  
 Ah ! Coll is the island for me !



O where is the Sawbath so slack ?  
 And where is tobacco so mild ?  
 And where are the rabbits so black ?  
 And where are the hoodies so wild ?  
 And where are the sunsets so fine ?  
 And where is one mile so like three ?  
 And where is the beer so divine ?  
 Ah ! Coll is the island for me !

But enough of this wearisome " where " ;  
 I wish I were up there again,  
 To eat of the sweet Highland fare  
 (And lose it—through David Mac-Brayne).  
 And I wish, Johnny, you were there too ;  
 Our hearts are not here but N.B.  
 For Coll is the island for you,  
 And Coll is the island for me ! '

I have no file of the Brighton papers—the *Sussex Daily News*, the *Argus*, an evening journal, and the *Southern Weekly News*—for all of which I wrote ; but I wrote nothing worth reprinting except a series of descriptions of Sussex castles and historic houses, which I found useful later, when compiling the ' Highways and Byways ' book on that county. Everything else was ephemeral and, I am sure, callow.

If this book were not confined to literary matters, I should please myself by saying a good deal about the Brighton theatre in those years—1889-92—for I saw everything that I wanted to, free, and saw also at the Pavilion the chief entertainers of that time : Corney Grain, George Grossmith, Samuel Brandram, Clifford Harrison, none of whom seems to have any successor to-day, while, should any arise, I fear that the B.B.C. would quickly snap him up and thus deprive us of everything but his voice.

The stage performances I remember with most pleasure and distinctness were those by the Kendals in their repertory weeks, which included *A Scrap of Paper*, *The Ironmaster*, *The Squire* and *The King's Shilling*, and by Beerbolm Tree and Julia Neilson in *The Ballad Monger*. I still think Mrs.

(now Dame) Kendal in *A Scrap of Paper* the most fascinating of actresses. As for Julia Neilson, I was so much moved by her as Loyse that I sent her some verses. That was in 1890, and she is still winning hearts and turning the heads of young men, while only the other day her daughter was playing Queen Elizabeth. Here are the lines on *The Ballad Monger*, a French poetical play by Théodore de Banville, adapted by Walter Besant, the novelist, and Walter Herries Pollock, who used to edit the *Saturday Review* and was a Jane Austen enthusiast.

## AND THEN ?

I wonder what was the after life  
Of this strangely mated man and wife,—  
The soulful poet haggard and thin,  
And the fair young girl with the strong square chin.

Did passion die in a month or two,  
As passion will—only too often—do,  
By nothing at all but regret replaced,  
Suggesting the folly of marriage in haste ?  
Did—? No ! And of aspects twain I prefer  
Always to gaze on the happier.

I fancy the lovers continued to love,  
Still finding joy in the blue above,  
Still finding joy in the sun's bright light,  
In the blossoms by day, and the stars by night,  
Two children of nature, innocent, gay,  
Threading the world by the Primrose way,  
With a mutual carol as free and glad  
As the final verse to the King's ballade.

Did Gringoire, I wonder, continue to sing  
With the populace round him clustering,  
Or did he make his last adieus  
To a very obliging but dangerous muse,  
And grow in time, as a husband should,  
Domestic, conservative, songless, and good ?

And she—Loyse—I wonder how  
 Matronhood dealt with her broad white brow,  
 And whether maternal trouble and care  
 Silvered that wealth of rebellious hair.

Simon the mercer relented at last,  
 For the wrath of a father is quickly past,  
 And who could resist those earnest eyes !  
 While Louis, the King, humane and wise,  
 That his god-daughter's lot might not be poor,  
 Presented her lord with a sinecure,  
 ('Twas needed, too, for a poet's ardour  
 Is of small avail in filling the larder)  
 And, laying his jewelled hand on her head,  
 'Loyse,' he asked, 'are you sorry you wed ?'  
 I know to a syllable what she said.

Thus happy was each succeeding year,  
 With manifold smiles and never a tear,  
 And the little Loyses and Gringoires grew,  
 And shared in the joy of their parents too.

'Tis thus that I read the after life  
 Of Gringoire, the bard, and Loyse his wife.

On receipt of these lines, Miss Neilson sent me a signed photograph, which I still treasure. I had laid them also before Beerbolm Tree, but received no reply. When I met him years afterwards at luncheon at Sir Henry Lucy's (where he was asked to sign the famous table-cloth and I wasn't), I asked him if he had any memory of *The Ballad Monger* incident ; and he had none.

But though the scheme of this book excludes other people's dramatic work, it comprises my own, such as it is, and I must therefore relate that one Christmas the theatre management called me in to touch up the book of the pantomime and make it topical. A thankless task. The real author was Wilton Jones, who had taken his duties very lightly. The introductory speech of the Wolf, for the story was *Red Riding Hood*, proves that I had caught the manner :

' I peer through larder windows in the night  
And see fat joints and tremble with delight.  
I sniff beneath the doors of butcher shops  
To try to catch the odour of lamb chops.  
These things I love, but better far than these  
Are nice plump children served with toasted cheese.  
I *can't* eat boys and girls of good behaviour ;  
The naughty children have the richest flavour.'

The Wolf, who was played by an actor named Michael Dwyer, tore my nerves to shreds by putting in extra syllables : a calamity, I believe, to which every writer of couplets is liable. The principal funny man, who was no other than G. H. Chirgwin, ' the White-eyed Kaffir ', was even less respectful to my metre ; in fact he made no effort whatever to reproduce it, having very prudently brought his own jokes with him. In one point, and one only, this production was unique. Being in difficulty with a line, and (very foolishly) wishing it to scan, I asked Vincent Brown to help. What I particularly lacked was a three-syllabled word for a nose. ' Try " redundant," ' said Brown, and I did so. That version of *Red Riding Hood* thus became the only pantomime that ever had the word redundant in it.

It was at a supper party, while this work was in progress, that I met J. L. Toole, then touring in Barrie's play, *Walker, London*. In later years I was often to see him on the Brighton Front in his Bath-chair, sinking steadily and pathetically into the grave ; but he was then as active as his limp permitted, and in great form. I found that his husky voice was natural and not put on for the stage ; and you can't go wrong with a husky voice. On some one mentioning W. S. Gilbert, who, in spite of being a humorist, was a very determined litigant, Toole told us of a visit he had paid on the previous Sunday to Gilbert at his house at Harrow Weald. ' Here I am at last,' he said to his host as he got out of the carriage. ' I was afraid if I put it off any longer you'd bring an action against me.'

I remember that it was very late and I was very tired,

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but, being by far the youngest, I did not like to leave first, and so sat on and on waiting for Toole to get up. But this was the last thing the lonely old man wanted to do. 'I can't go to bed,' he said, 'don't force me to go to bed; the room is full of ghosts.'

Let me end the record of my Brighton days by recording an incident which might have very materially changed the tenor of my life. The third Lord Sheffield, whose interest in cricket amounted to a passion, was, while assembling his famous 1891-92 team for Australia, which included W. G. Grace, staying at the Royal Crescent Hotel on the Marine Parade. It occurred to me that he might like to take with him a historian of the tour and I called on him to offer my services. But he was too well protected for me ever to reach the presence.

## CHAPTER IV

### LONDON BEGINNINGS

Harrington Square—University College—W. P. Ker—A naughty sonnet—A. E. Housman—Richard Whiteing—Theodore Watts—Walter Raleigh—William Bateson—The *Privateer*—Some Literary Recipes—Alphonse Legros—Satirical verses—'Poor Mr. Kipling'—*Songs of the Bat*—A visit to the *Globe* office—The Whitefriars Club—David Christie Murray—H. W. Lucy—Quarrels of authors—Robert Buchanan—T. W. H. Crosland—'Hugh Conway'—Edward VII as critic—The *English Illustrated Magazine*—F. Anstey—Lord Balfour's blind spot—Clement Shorter—Robertson Nicoll—Modern reviewing—Edmund Gosse

I MIGHT have remained on the *Sussex Daily News* for ever had not still another of my uncles acquired a 'concern', as Quakers say, for my future and produced a sum of two hundred pounds in order that I might go to London and attend lectures at University College for as long as the money lasted.

In January, 1892, therefore, I found lodgings in Harrington Square, Camden Town—opposite Mornington Crescent, where Tennyson once had rooms, in a cupboard in one of which he left the MS. of 'In Memoriam', and only a few yards beyond the house in the Hampstead Road with a tablet on it saying that George Cruikshank lived there, Cruikshank, who had illustrated *Oliver Twist* and Harrison Ainsworth and whose great teetotal satire, 'The Triumph of Bacchus', I had known in a maple frame ever since I could remember. My bed-sitting room was on the top floor; I had breakfast in a little back room on the ground floor with a plaster bust of Dante as its sole decoration, not impossibly a replica of the one which Eckermann once discovered Goethe scrutinizing as he also ate.

Miraculous to relate, Harrington Square and Mornington Crescent still stand, although a large part of the Crescent's garden is now covered by a tobacco factory; but my nearest abode of harmony and good humour, the Bedford Music Hall, has recently become a cinema theatre.

To arrive in London with two hundred pounds is of course to have one-hundred-and-ninety-nine-pounds-seventeen-and-six too much. The rules of romance were sadly fractured. But on the other hand I have not made the requisite fortune since.

When one has to spread two hundred pounds over a period of eighteen months (including lecture fees) it is necessary to be frugal, but living was not so expensive then and I managed to combine amusement with study. I haunted the museums and picture galleries, I explored London on foot, I went down to Greenwich by steamer and to Hampton Court by bus. Every Sunday in spring and summer I was at Epping or Richmond or in Kew Gardens. I saw plays from the gallery and occupied standing-room at the music halls. On Mondays I went to the Zoo because that was a sixpenny day, and sixpence was the entrance fee at Lord's and the Oval. The Boat Race was free. Now and then the *Globe* accepted verses or an article; now and then I had a windfall. I remember, for instance, meeting my ship-owning uncle all unexpectedly in the street, when he drew me aside saying, 'Edward, I owe thee five pounds,' and thereupon counted them into my hand: five golden pounds, such as cheered our hearts in those days before the degradation to anaemic paper notes had come upon us: heavy, solid, comforting sovereigns with Saint George killing the Dragon on one side and Queen Victoria's reassuring head on the other.

After two years in the cynical atmosphere of a newspaper office, and coming close to such varied life as police courts and inquests provide, I must confess that to be at school again seemed now and then rather like a step backward; but there was always London as compensation, and there were the lectures of W. P. Ker, the Professor of

English Literature, and there was the company of L. F. Giblin, now Statistician General of Tasmania. In addition to the lectures of Ker, I attended also those by A. E. Housman, Professor of Latin, Arthur Platt, Professor of Greek, and James Sully, Professor of Psychology. I also employed an Austrian fellow-student to come to my rooms, sit by my side and read French with me; and I spent hours at home translating the stories of Guy de Maupassant, an occupation which I maintain is as good a preparation for writing one's own language as could be devised.

But the best hours of my life were spent in listening to the oracular comments that emerged from Ker's compressed lips. Although his was the Chair of English, he could as easily have filled any other, for his knowledge was universal. The lines in *The Deserted Village*,

'And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew,'

I used to repeat to myself automatically when I was with him. They had a peculiar appropriateness, for W. P.'s head was, as a matter of fact, unusually small. It was perfectly shaped, the forehead giving one the same pleasure as a masterpiece of plastic art. How he could have read so much, of old and new, in so many languages, and retained it, was a mystery, for he led a far from sedentary life: lecturing by day, entertaining on most of his London nights, while every Friday he was off to Paddington *en route* to Oxford, to his real home, All Souls, where there was more talk than study. He was also a dancer and a playgoer, and every vacation he spent on walking tours in Scotland or England or Wales, in Norway or among his darling Alps. No scholar could have enjoyed the visible world with more zest than he; and he met his death as he would have liked, dying suddenly as he was climbing the Pizzo Bianco. He had just said, 'I thought this was the most beautiful spot in the world, and now I know it is,' when his heart stopped. He was buried where, had the question



been put to him at any time in his later years, he would probably have chosen : at Macugnaga.

No one that I ever knew used so few words as W. P. or did more with them. His 'Good' was worth pages of elaborate praise ; his 'Bad' was a death sentence. Tom Moore, I remember, was a 'bad' poet. Among contemporary writers on his black list, John Morley—'Mr. Morley'—occupied a high position, and I rather fancy that James Anthony Froude—'Mr. Froude'—was not far off. Of his hero, Sir Walter Scott, he loved every word, even the prefaces ; of Wordsworth too. In fact, there was no excellence in all literature, from Greek to Scandinavian, that he did not relish and extol. But his condemnations were as emphatic as his praises. I shall always remember his comment when I told him that William Sharp had confided to a friend of mine that whenever he was preparing to write as Fiona Macleod he dressed himself entirely in woman's clothes. 'Did he ?' said W. P.—'the bitch !'

Looking back now it seems to me that he came to all that was best, no matter how different in tenor, with the same sympathy and delight,—to Shakespeare, Sturli Sturli, Wordsworth, Dryden, Goldsmith, *In Memoriam*—only that when an extract particularly moved him his voice broke a little and his eye-glasses dimmed. He lived alone in his great Gower Street house, and when you dined with him there—his other place of hospitality was the United Universities Club—you began downstairs with one bottle of Burgundy on the table and another in the fireplace, and finished upstairs in a room entirely filled with books—books on the shelves, books on the tables, and more on the floor—through which you picked your way to your armchair. This room was lighted only by two candles, by the light of whose tiny flames W. P. did most of his reading. If during conversation a book were needed he would lift one of the candles, bearing it rather high, and, stooping, with lowered head, advance, peering through his glasses, to the exact spot in this chaos where it was

to be found. Those candlesticks are now mine. It sounds like a far cry from a book-congested room in Gower Street to the Alpine slope where he breathed his last ; but there is no discordancy. The true W. P. was to be found in both environments.

W. P. has not been adequately written about. Charles Whibley, who knew him as well as anybody and had in his presence almost the attitude of one who had captured him by force, put a preface to his collected essays but said in it too little of the man. Nothing could be better than the 'Appreciation' by Ker's pupil and afterwards his successor, R. W. Chambers, issued by the British Academy ; but though a model of its kind, it is too brief. W. P. James, who had first known Ker at Cardiff when he was Professor of Literature there, and who walked with him every year, could provide a biography with many good pages. It was a matter of great pride to me that James's collection of essays, *The Lure of the Map*, a most delightful book, was dedicated jointly to Ker and myself.

I find that, many years later, in some verses to be read on a convivial occasion at University College in 1915, when W. P. was the guest of honour, I emphasized the difference between the Professor as his pupils knew him and the man.

#### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER

W. P. KER

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1915.

To his pupils, perhaps, who have ne'er had the chance  
To observe him in Cornwall, in Wales, or in France,  
Nor can separate yet the machine from the god,  
His closeness to Nature might seem to be odd.  
When they hear him on dull academical things,  
How *can* they suppose that his donkey has wings ?  
How *can* they, I ask you, divine, all untried,  
That here is an instance of Jekyll and Hyde ?

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That their bookish instructor, too learned by half,  
Is wild all the time for his knapsack and staff?  
For they see him in clothes professorially cut,  
A man of the Town (not unduly a Knut),  
In a hat of the kind that a conjurer begs  
For production of cakes from destruction of eggs:  
A hat which the swiftest of glimpses will tell  
Has been used by the wizards less wisely than well.  
As their thoughts wander forth while he mournfully reads,  
How *can* they imagine his grandeur in tweeds,  
Or what knowledge is his, that no authors supply,  
Of all that is best from the Lizard to Skye?  
How *can* they suppose, as his facts he pours out—  
Putting Pope in his place and Piers Plowman past doubt,  
Contrasting the spirit of Chaucer with Gower's—  
That he'll play fifty up, though it takes him three hours?

He arrives—but my data, you see, are not new,  
And he may have reformed, but I doubt if that's true:  
On ancient experience only I state—  
He arrives, with punctilio, ten minutes late.  
Once there, he is critical, absolute, bleak,  
With a meagre allowance of jokes—one a week,  
And little, how little! the class to inform  
That Burgundy's down at his fireside to warm.

In the world of pure learning he shines as a star,  
No scholar but's grateful to Kare (or to Kar).  
He's read every book—by two candles so dim;  
And Babel in vain was frustrated for him.  
In Iceland they know him: he stands as the type  
Of true British culture; *plus* sunburn and pipe;  
At Oxford his word on each subject is law;  
In Gower Street—but all know *our* feelings of awe.  
Yet, no matter how fearful we are, we agree  
There was ne'er finer Fellow than W. P.  
And pleasure and pride do we equally share  
To meet in the honour of Kar (or of Kare).

I can understand that not everyone had the same affectionate admiration for W. P. as those who knew him

best ; but I cannot understand how there could possibly be any anti-Ker party.

I quote elsewhere in this book his counsel regarding the use of repetition in writing. Another thing that I remember him saying to me was, 'Never get rid of a book ; you will want it again.' But he was not too consistent in this matter, for when he came into the possession of the edition of Balzac which Stevenson had owned and annotated he gave the whole set to Sidney Colvin.

I could hardly expect that W. P. was in the habit of claiming anyone as a pupil as impressionistic as I—very unlikely, I think—but I know that one at any rate of my privately circulated effusions gave him great satisfaction and used to be shown by him to congenial spirits. It followed upon the publication of Professor Harper's new biography of Wordsworth, and ran thus :

## LINES

WRITTEN ON HEARING THAT A FRENCH PROFESSOR HAS  
DISCOVERED BEYOND DOUBT THAT WORDSWORTH, WHEN  
IN FRANCE IN 1791-3, BECAME THE FATHER OF AN  
ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

O priceless lapse, supreme incontinence !  
This brings thee nearer, Master. In our view  
No more a cold white peak against the blue,  
Superior, unscaleable, immense,  
Art thou, but one who once bade virtue hence  
Even as ordinary mortals do.  
Lucky for thee that Byron never knew :  
But we know now, and O the difference !

Wordsworth, thou shouldst be living at this hour.  
England has need of thee, this barren land,  
With indiarubber shops on every hand,  
And pennyroyal waxing in its power,<sup>1</sup>  
And children called 'encumbrances' ! In fine  
We faint for want of recklessness like thine.

<sup>1</sup> This line would now read :

And Marie Stopes increasing in her power.

If W. P. was not concerned to claim me as a feather in his cap, A. E. Housman would have been even less likely to do so ; for, lacking the necessary grounding, I was not able to do justice to his lectures. No one, however, could admire his poems more than I do, and I think some of the loveliest music in our language is to be found in the lyric in the *Last Poems*, beginning—

‘ When lads were home from labour . . . ’

And there is no poem inspired by the War which to me is so moving as that in which, after saying how, in his youth, he longed to find friends to die for, the poet tells how in saddened maturity he found something very different.

‘ I sought them far and found them,  
The sure, the straight, the brave,  
The hearts I lost my own to,  
The souls I could not save.  
They braced their belts about them,  
They crossed in ships the sea,  
They sought and found six feet of ground,  
And there they died for me.’

The last time I saw the author was three or four years ago when we were in the same aeroplane from Paris. He told me that it was his seventeenth flight and that he was on his way back from Venice after sitting at the bedside, in a hospital in the lagoon, of the gondolier whom he had employed for many years and who, in this last illness, had asked for him.

One doesn’t hear the phrase ‘ good talkers ’ so much as one used to, but in my early days in London there were many men famous for their conversation. It was the thing to talk well. I don’t know that I cared much about meeting them, for everything they said sounded as if they had said it before, and what I enjoy is the offspring of the moment ; but they were informative enough. At one of the houses to which I carried an introduction soon after

arriving in London in 1892—Richard Whiteing's in St. Mary Abbot's Terrace—many well-known talkers were in the habit of meeting.

Whiteing had not then written his novel *No. 5 John Street*, which brought him his fame (and which, as Reader for Grant Richards, I was to discover), but he was an active journalist, and the author of a delicate satirical fantasy called *The Island*, and was prepared at a moment's notice to converse wittily, whimsically or oracularly on any theme that occurred.

I had a standing invitation to Sunday's evening meal, and as other people were similarly on the free list there used to be plenty to listen to. I say listen, for I was much too shy to take part; nor am I what is called a talker: indeed I have been accused of ruining much good conversation by interjecting nonsense. In consequence of this shyness I must confess to having allowed several Sundays to pass before I could collect enough courage to ring the bell. I went all the way down to Kensington, on a bus, starving, and then daren't face the ordeal of meeting strangers. No one who is not shy can have any notion of the odds with which the shy have to contend and what bitter struggles they pass through. I have often gone without lunch or dinner wholly through a reluctance, amounting to an inability, to enter a restaurant alone. I don't pretend to be as shy as that now, but am still more of a claustrophil than a claustrophobe.

Whiteing was a carefully groomed man, almost a dandy, with a scented handkerchief. He had a fine great grey head and grey beard and strong distinctive features as though carved from stone. From his careful way of talking, it was easy to tell that he had spent much of his life in Paris speaking French. His mind was richly stored and I listened with interest, although the something unexpected that I wanted never came.

When Theodore Watts, Swinburne's guardian, was at Whiteing's, the talk was more general, for Watts liked to be heard too. He also talked as though saying it for the

thousandth time, and chiefly about books and authors, but he compelled attention. It was very exciting for me to be sitting at the same table as the friend of the author of the *Poems and Ballads*; with one who, when he left St. Mary Abbot's Terrace, would actually get into a hansom in order to drive to 'The Pines'. Swinburne wasn't wholly my own poet, as I have said; even then I wanted poets to say more; but had he not written 'Felise', and 'The Garden of Proserpine', and 'When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces'? Also, more recently, the 'Ode to a Scamew', which I knew by heart, and which I always think, although written long before the end, was his last poem to contain the old authentic music:

'Our dreams have wings that falter,  
 Our hearts bear hopes that die;  
 For thee no dream could better  
 A life no fears may fetter,  
 A pride no care can alter,  
 That wots not whence or why  
 Our dreams have wings that falter,  
 Our hearts bear hopes that die.

With joy more fierce and sweeter  
 Than joys we deem divine,  
 Their lives, by time untarnished,  
 Are girt about and garnished,  
 Who match the wave's full metre  
 And drink the wind's wild wine  
 With joy more fierce and sweeter  
 Than joys we deem divine.

Ah, well were I for ever,  
 Wouldst thou change lives with me,  
 And take my song's wild honey,  
 And give me back thy sunny  
 Wide eyes that weary never,  
 And wings that search the sea;  
 Ah, well were I for ever,  
 Wouldst thou change lives with me.

These lines and the march from Raff's 'Lenore' have made many a long walk shorter or, at any rate, less fatiguing.

A strange piece of good fortune for a shy young man from the country—to be sitting with Theodore Watts, who was not only the friend of Swinburne but had been Rossetti's intimate friend too. I heard from his own lips the whole story of the chloral and the death of Mrs. Rossetti and the burial of the manuscript poems and their exhumation. All this, which he must have told countless times, he told again. It was probably the gem of his repertory. Watts was interesting also about a plausible and, I gather, very attractive scamp named Charles Howell, who hung about the studios and made himself indispensable to two such different artists as Rossetti and Whistler. I have heard much about this man from time to time, but have never succeeded in getting a sight of his photograph.

One thing that Watts said I often think of: his reply to the question if he was going away for Easter. No, he said, he should stay in London. In fact, he added, he dared not leave London—'dared' was the word—for fear that while he was absent some one interesting would arrive and disappear again and he would thus miss him.

Several years later, after he had become Watts-Dunton, I met him again in his Putney home; but that is an experience to be described later in this book.

I ought not to leave Richard Whiteing without saying a word about the two elderly ladies with whom he shared his house—my first London hostesses. These were Alice and Henriette Cockran, who seemed to know or to have known everybody of eminence in the literary and artistic world. Alice was a writer, Henriette a painter—who had been taught by that strange Irish genius, W. G. Wills, the dramatist—but she could write too, as her lively but very fragmentary book, *Celebrities and I* (of which Wills may be said to be the hero), abundantly testifies. I remember finding Alice more friendly than her sister, who shared a plate with a lap-dog and who used too much French. She was also uncompromisingly caustic in her criticisms of people.



Alice had an odd little difficulty in pronunciation, which was almost too much for me when I had at last collected enough courage to arrive for my first meal. 'Mr. Lutas,' she said, 'I am sorry it is such a poor supper, but we have just lost our toot' (cook).

Another London house to which I carried an introduction was that of William Kuhe, the impresario and musician, whose privilege it was to make the first pianoforte selection of each of the new Gilbert and Sullivan operas and who was thus a national benefactor. Mr. Kuhe, who was then getting on in years but who looked older than he was, made me very welcome, and I still think of him as one of the sweetest of characters. He had a long, lean figure, with an eager, wrinkled, spectacled face suspended, so to speak, in mid-air. From this height, he dropped into the conversation humorous comments and puns. It is odd that the other most determined punster that I know—even in excess of Sir Edwin Lutyens—is also a musician: Herman Finck. One of Kuhe's remarks to me is peculiarly appropriate just now, with A. P. Herbert's new version of *La Belle Helène* fresh in the public memory. 'The British public', said Kuhe, in his kindly German voice 'prefers Offenbach to Bach often.'

It was through W. P. that I met not a few men whom in time I was fortunate to know well: that most fascinating talker, for instance, Walter Raleigh, who descended from a high altitude to be wise and witty and fearless and fantastic and occasionally very revolutionary, all in the most confidential way. Meanwhile he would be pulling at the biggest pipe you ever saw. His premature death, due to the zeal with which he threw himself into the preparations for his official history of the Air Force, even flying to Baghdad for data, was an irreparable blow to culture and to his friends. With what joy I used to see his head towering over the screen as he entered the lunch-room at the Athenaeum! Of another member possessed of the same absurd height, Sidney Colvin once said that he had but one grudge against him and that was that he led you to

believe it was Raleigh who was coming in and then plunged you into disappointment. Raleigh and I shared an admiration for the frank and free humours and narrative skill of Arthur Binstead, known as 'Talepitcher', of the *Sporting Times*.

I remember how flattered I once was when Raleigh, the Longest Knight, as I used to call him, came up to me at the Athenaeum and very gravely said that he had just been reading something of mine and had found in it one of the profoundest truths ever enunciated. I had said, he continued, that in no hotel bedroom and in no spare room was there ever anything on which to hang a razor-strop.

William Bateson, the Mendelist, was another remarkable man and friend of W. P.'s who died far too soon. The vigorous Yorkshire mind which he kept in a leonine head came swiftly to a decision about everything, and he expressed his views with uncompromising frankness. A characteristic saying of his emerged from an occasion when he met a wealthy Jewish art collector who was congratulating himself on having assembled his treasures 'on the best advice'. 'I should like to catch anyone advising me,' said Bateson. His own collection of drawings by the best hands was very choice. Possibly it was because he so liked drawings, which are unique possessions, that he took so little interest in etchings, which are multiplied. In fact he went so far as to affirm that all etchings were equally meritorious or equally negligible. Not long before his untimely end, from pneumonia, he himself took to painting and would, had he continued, have turned out some fine strong work.

A literary discovery which we found we had both made was the ellipsis in the last line of FitzGerald's quatrain:

'The Grape that can with Logic absolute  
The "two-and-seventy jarring" Sects confute:  
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice  
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute.'

The last line could be amended to:

‘The Lead of Life can into Gold transmute,’

if the pedant insisted ; but it is very strange that Fitzgerald’s fastidious eye let it pass.<sup>1</sup>

After Bateson’s death, his widow issued a collection of letters written by him to his mother when, as a young man of twenty-four, he was travelling in Russia and Western Asia in search of entomological specimens. Although *Letters from the Steppe* is a fascinating volume, full of close observation, vivid description, natural history and high spirits, it found no public.

One of my side activities at University College was to found and edit a paper called *The Privateer*, which lasted for eleven numbers. I had not seen it for many, many years until I dug the bound volume from a packing-case for the purposes of this book. My own contributions, with the exception of an impassioned plea for universal and simultaneous suicide (the world having become so vulgar and mechanical), were chiefly literary squibs, as they tend to be in this kind of periodical. I will drag from their obscurity a few of a series of recipes bearing upon the most prominent authors of that day. My Brighton hero leads off.

#### BLACK PUDDING

Take a beautiful and witty girl, a frankly critical gillie, a banjo, a peer, a fishing-rod, a humorous philosopher, and a sunrise. Mix them together in a yacht, and flavour with Gaelic. Serve in three volumes.

#### BESANT STOCK

From this admirable stock is made the soup found so nourishing by the East-end poor. For tickets apply at the People’s Palace. An old ingredient was Rice, but, though less piquant, it is stronger without. The present receipt is as follows : Throw into the stockpot a Stepney slum, some philosophic dossers, a Quixotic heiress, a scheme for Social regeneration, a Toynbee Hall prig, some decorous affection, and heaps of respectability.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Williston, the American jurist, suggests

‘Life’s leaden metal can to gold transmute.’

## DOBSON OMELETTE

A very choice delicacy. Compress good taste, kindly humour, light wit, and graceful fancy. Add a soupçon of French and Latin, and flavour with the Eighteenth Century. Serve on hand-made paper.

## BRET TART

This sweet has of late lost much of the relish which it was wont to impart some years ago. There is reason to believe that an important ingredient is missing—youth maybe, or enthusiasm, or perhaps ambition. Many gourmets, however, still enjoy Bret Tart. Directions: Form a crust of Californian flour and fill in with pretty feminine hesitations, damns, red shirts, deprecatory males, six-shooters, Paris fashions, greasers, euchre, and a mutilated decalogue.

## HAGGARD RAGOUT

Chop up a million Zulus into small pieces with a Scandinavian battle-axe, and leave in the African sun to simmer. Throw in some sprigs of undergraduate fun, a few leaves of 'Isaiah', and the stalks of Bulwerian mysticism. Add a spoonful of Lang's Essence of Homer.

## KIPLING CHUTNEE

This pickle has a peculiar mordant quality which distinguishes it from all others. The chief ingredient is unwashed English, chopped, broken, and bruised with a brazen instrument. Then work in chips and fragments of cynicism, 'B. V.'s poems,<sup>1</sup> the seven cardinal sins, the 'Soldier's Pocket Book', the 'Civil Service Regulations', Simla manners, profanity, an Ekka pony, the Southern Cross, and genius. Spice with a Tipperary brogue.

## SHORTHOUSE ICE

Devonshire cream, one part; the bluest blood, five parts; holy water, two parts; pure liquid from the well of English undefiled, two parts. Pour into a font at sunset, and stir with a sceptre. Serve in an antique chalice.

<sup>1</sup> 'B. V.' was the pseudonym of James Thomson, author of *The City of Dreadful Night*.

## CLARK RISSOLES

Mince an A.B. Then add seaweed, topsails, Board of Trade regulations, compasses, anchors, Lloyd's signal code, hornpipes, tornadoes, and leaves of Marryat and the *Daily Telegraph*, chopped very fine. Moisten with the Atlantic, and roll into balls. Fry over the galley fire, and garnish with romance.

## SHAKESPEARE ELIXIR

Receipt lost.

I find also some invented correspondence on the vacancy at the Slade School of Art caused by the resignation of Alphonse Legros, in which Ruskin was made to write as follows :

BRANTWOOD

DEAR SIRs,—

Nay, not dear ; why should I call you dear when you are nothing to me, when I do not even know (your so-called) Christian names ? You want, as I understand it, to replace Professor Legros at the end of this term ; to use, as far as in your power, what poor faculties God has given you in the choice of a right teacher of Art for the Slade School. Well. Now, although I have always felt, and always affirmed with the whole strength of hand and voice, that in London true Art is impossible, and although I have attained to a great age, yet I am ready to make still another sacrifice for the welfare of this sodden, beef-eating, and entirely damned English nation.

You may, therefore, consider me elected in the stead of Professor Legros, and at once inform the students that at last the just principles of Art will be honestly and definitely set before them. In the meantime, I would wish them to study carefully all my published works.

JOHN R....N

Whistler applied also :

PARIS

Who killed Oscar and 'Arry ? Who buried Sidney Colvin ? Who routed Ruskin ? *C'est moi !* There is only one painter, one etcher, one Art teacher. Again, *c'est moi !* Why, then, seek further ?

JAMES MCNEIL W.....R

But the successor to Legros who was appointed was Mr. Fred Brown.

I regret that I saw nothing of the Slade students of that time ; nor did I ever see Legros, of whom there should be a memoir to preserve his sayings. One which used to be repeated was his reply to the French friend who asked him what were the advantages of taking out naturalization papers to become a British subject, as he was proposing to do. 'Well, to begin with,' he said: 'I win the Battle of Waterloo.'

Now and then I attended lectures outside the College, among them a series on the Victorian poets by Churton Collins at Toynbee Hall. This was not long after his famous attack on Gosse, and I was interested in seeing what manner of man this antagonist was. I found him to be pink-faced, with a cylindrical topper perched on a yellow mane, and to give the impression of over-work and under-pay. We came back together two or three times, and I left him at his house in Bloomsbury. He talked incessantly and mirthlessly and rather mechanically, and I remember having the feeling that he was an unhappy and probably embittered man.

Looking through the album in which I pasted the work of those days, I find a few scraps of verse that may be worth citing here. Thus, when the Laureateship was made vacant, in 1892, by the death of Tennyson, and was waiting to be filled, I feigned that the principal poets of the day expressed their right to the succession. The best efforts were those of the two Morris'es, Lewis and William. Lewis wanted, but William didn't. Thus carefully Tennysonian in form was the claim of the author of the *Epic of Hades*, a work for whose popularity the praises uttered by John Bright were largely responsible :

'I hold it truth, the partisan  
Is fittest for the laurel wreath ;  
That Cymric bard who from its sheath  
Drew sword to aid the Grand Old Man.

So give it me ; and I will spin  
 Epics of " Gallant Little Wales "  
 And I will babble blameless tales  
 In platitudinous Penbryn.'

And here is William Morris :

' Of Queen and State I have no time to sing :  
 Good store of work is mine in editing,  
 Each hour I give a Socialist address,  
 To frame Utopias is no little thing,  
 Nor is eternal weaving, I confess,  
 No longer is my day an empty day,  
 I prithee, therefore, take the crown away.'

We meet the same poets again, and others, in the following earlier lines, when Tennyson was still living, about the G.O.M. and the statement in a newspaper that, among a number of second-hand books which Mr. Gladstone had recently bought, was a copy of *Walker's Rhyming Dictionary*. That was enough for any journalist versifier :

' Ah, my Lord Tennyson, walk very warily,  
 Swinburne, thou rioter, look well ahead,  
 Dobson, my butterfly, never so airily  
 Though thou may'st sting now, thy triumph is dead.  
 Morris, of Penbryn, thy minutes are numbered,  
 Morris, of Paradise, dashed is thy cup,  
 Bridges, rare Bridges, too long hast thou slumbered,  
 Bouncing Buchanan, thou'dst better dry up.  
 Lang, thou allusive one, cease ballade-mongering,  
 Watson, retire to pre-Allen repose,  
 Sims, for thy staves though the million be hungering,  
 Still were it wiser to buckle to prose.  
 All other bards, of whatever ability,  
 Take my advice and retire while you can ;  
 To stay means defeat by the weird versatility  
 Shown by the Grand Old Poetical Man.'

—For the benefit of those readers who have forgotten or never knew, I may explain the phrase ' pre-Allen ' by saying that William Watson found, in his early days, an

eloquent champion in Grant Allen. George R. Sims, of course, in addition to being a playwright and the most popular writer on the *Referee*, was the author of the 'Dagonet' ballads, the most famous of which was 'Ostler Joe', once too dear to reciters but now heard no more. Nor could it be revived, for the genre has been killed for ever by the ruthless burlesque methods of Billy Bennett, 'almost a gentleman'.

I had something to say too about Mr. Kipling, after Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, had given me the cue. A real subject.

### POOR MR. KIPLING

#### OR, THE LIMITATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

"Kipling is a relation of my wife's, though he does not know it."—DR. PARKER: in an interview in *Idler*.

The secrets of the sea are his, the mysteries of Ind,  
He knows minutely every way in which mankind has sinned ;  
He has by heart the lightships 'twixt the Goodwins and the  
Cape,

The language of the elephant, the ethics of the ape ;  
He knows the slang of Silver Street, the horrors of Lahore,  
And how the man-seal breasts the waves that buffet  
Labrador ;

He knows Samoan Stevenson, he knows the Yankee Twain,  
The value of Theosophy, of cheek, and Mr. Caine ;  
He knows each fine gradation 'twixt the General and the  
sub.

The terms employed by Atkins when they sling him from  
a pub.

He knows an Ekka pony's points, the leper's drear abode,  
The seamy side of Simla, the flaring Mile End Road ;  
He knows the Devil's tone to souls too pitiful to damn,  
He knows the taste of every regimental mess in 'cham' ;  
He knows enough to annotate the Bible verse by verse,  
And how to draw the shekels from the British public's purse.  
But varied though his knowledge is, it has its limitation,  
Alas, he doesn't know he's Dr. Parker's wife's relation !



It was these lines which caused Harry Cust, who was then editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*, where they appeared, to decree that there must be a poem of some kind or other in the paper every evening. I was thus, all unconsciously, the begetter of 'Occ. Verse'.

My second publication, also in rhyme, was written and issued in the summer of 1892 after spending too much lecture time at Lord's. It was called *Songs of the Bat* and, in pricing it at a penny, my design was that Craig, the famous poet of the Oval, should sell it. But I was lacking in imagination. Poets, I ought, even then, to have known, don't sell the work of other poets. The result was that it was never sold at all and, as I was also the publisher, I still possess several hundred copies.

The best of the *Songs of the Bat* were included in a book about cricket, which I brought out, in 1898, called *Willow and Leather*.

One day, as the end of my eighteen months was approaching, I wrote to Algernon Locker, the editor of the *Globe*, who had been either accepting my contributions or rejecting them with more than the usual printed form of regret, asking if I might call. He told me to do so and, at the end of our talk, while saying that there was no vacancy on the staff, he promised to keep my name before him.

Locker not only was encouraging at his office but he asked me to a dinner at the Whitefriars Club, a dining society, which met at Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street, where I was introduced to two beguilers of the young in the persons of G. A. Henty and George Manville Fenn. Henty was a big man with a big beard; Manville Fenn, who had made it possible for me to possess my beloved *World of Wit and Humour*, looked very like Dickens. Neither of them was a first-rate hero of mine—I had looked upon them as second to Ballantyne and Kingston—but I could not fail to be thrilled to shake hands which had guided the pen over so many thousands of exciting pages.

A more considerable author who was also present was a thick-set animated man in a velvet jacket, with a clean-

'shaven face and a mane of white hair, who talked with vigour and humour on any subject that came up. At first sight, he suggested the stage, but I found it was none other than David Christie Murray, one of whose novels, a very charming story called *Aunt Rachel*, I had read in that admirable but too short-lived magazine, the *English Illustrated*, which was a gallant attempt on the part of Macmillans to resist the invasion of the country by the *Century* and *Harper's*, and which I bought from its first number in October, 1883.

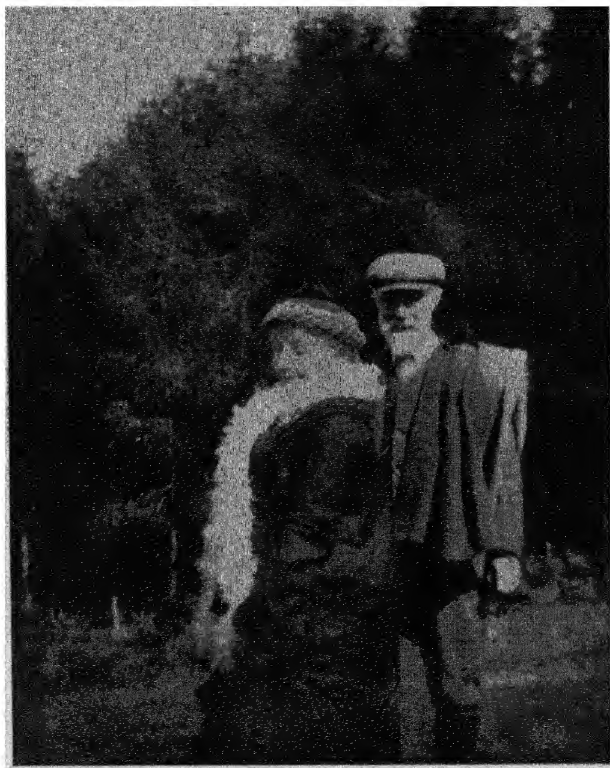
Later I was to meet every week at the *Punch* table Murray's particular aversion, Sir Henry Lucy. I have no idea how this feud began, but I know that Murray pursued it with zest, even to creating in his novel *The Way of the World* a despicable character called Mr. Amelia and, for fear that anyone should be under a misapprehension, crediting him with the authorship of a book entitled *Jacob Zladder*, Lucy having written one called *Gideon Fleece*.

Such animosities among authors seem to have died out. At any rate there are to-day few bouts in the literary arena. Within my memory are such famous fights as those between Furnivall and Swinburne, Churton Collins and Gosse, and Browning versus the ghost of Edward Fitz-Gerald. I was too young to be taking notice when, in 1871, Robert Buchanan, over the pseudonym Thomas Maitland, was attacking Rossetti, although I heard about it all from Sidney Colvin, who had entered the lists; but I remember how Buchanan used to trail his coat later, especially on one occasion when, in, I think, Harry Quilter's *Universal Review*, which began its brief but expensive existence in 1888, he attacked, in 1889, some typical 'Young Men' of the day: 'the Young Man in the Cheap Literary Suit', William Archer; the Superfine Young Man, Henry James, and the Typical 'Arry, who turned out to be George Moore, an Irishman. Some of them, I remember, hit back.

I suppose that the two last Berserks among English writers were T. W. H. Crosland and Frank Harris. Harris I never knew, but, having read the four volumes of his

privately printed autobiography, I cannot plead ignorance of that forceful personality, whether in private or public life ; but Crosland I used to see often, and indeed it was I who persuaded him to transfer his ' Literary Fables ' to the *Academy* from, I think, *Reynolds's Weekly*, where they were less fittingly placed. Some of these have a poignant quality all their own. One or two of Crosland's lyrics prove also that there was fine quality in him ; but the unhappy man could not order his life and, as a writer, was the victim of an overwhelming vanity. He was also always looking for affronts ; which is probably the highest of all high roads to misery.

Returning to the *English Illustrated Magazine*, I find that Murray's serial came in 1886 ; the first was Miss Yonge's *Armourer's Apprentices* ; the second, *A Family Affair* by ' Hugh Conway ' , an excellent novel of character, which proved that, had the author lived, he might have done fine work. There was no little curiosity as to how *A Family Affair* would develop, because ' Hugh Conway ' (the pen name of Frederick John Fergus, a Bristol auctioneer) was known solely by a couple of shilling shockers—the first of their kind—*Called Back*, 1883, and *Dark Days*, 1884. Published by Arrowsmith of Bristol, they had an enormous sale, and were noteworthy, not only for their quality, but because the second was hardly, if at all, inferior to the first : a rare thing. Unless I am mistaken, the success of *Called Back* derived considerable impetus from a paragraph in *Truth*, saying that it had kept the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) up all night. As H.R.H. was not conspicuous as a reader, this testimonial carried great weight. I can recall only one other occasion on which he expressed an opinion on a literary matter, and that was when he attended, many years later, the dinner given by George Smith to celebrate the completion of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, of which Sidney Lee (who one day was to be his official biographer) was then editor. ' And what is your special subject, Mr. Lee ? ' the Prince inquired. Lee, who told me the story, said it



SIR SIDNEY AND LADY COLVIN  
*From a photograph taken on a Surrey holiday*



A. E. W. MASON AND GABRIEL WELLS

*After the sale by auction of John Galsworthy's Loyalties at the 139th annual dinner of the  
Royal Literary Fund*

'was Shakespeare. The Prince was delighted. 'Stick to it, Mr. Lee,' he said, 'stick to it. There's money in it.'

I have been looking at the *English Illustrated* in its first three volumes, under Comyns Carr's editorship, and again admiring its quality. Among the authors were R. L. Stevenson, on dogs, illustrated by Randolph Caldecott; Henry James, with a eulogy of Matthew Arnold; H. D. Traill, with travel sketches; Dorothy Tennant, afterwards Lady Stanley, with notes and drawings of London urchins; Bret Harte, with 'A Ship of '49'; Wilkie Collins, with a short story; J. H. Shorthouse with 'The Little Schoolmaster Mark'; Canon Ainger, on the Temple and Lamb; and Austin Dobson, with topographical themes or original poems, illustrated by Hugh Thomson. That was a fine array, yet the venture failed. Later it was revived by Clement Shorter, on a very different plane, and with process blocks instead of woodcuts, but it could not live. Perhaps the title overweighted it. I remember writing for it an appreciation of F. Anstey as 'the best novelist of the tight place'.

Shorter was one of my editors for some years after he founded the *Sphere*, and he was a very lenient one. I never met anybody so completely a bookman as he; books and makers of books were his life, for, although he displayed no little ingenuity and even imagination in making his paper acceptable to the public, his principal interest in it was as offering a medium for his own views as expressed in his weekly page of literary gossip. He was a curious mixture of assertiveness and lack of assurance. Having stated his own opinion with all the vigour of which he was capable, he was oddly eager to know yours. A century or so earlier he would have been the subject of a satirical analytical character sketch, under some such name as Christopher Quidnunc, in the periodical whose name, but not spirit, he was to revive—the *Tatler*. He lent himself to the satirist as few men do, but his passion for literature was genuine and it must have quickened that of thousands of readers, which is all to the good.

Before leaving the belligerents, I am reminded that there was a big fight in my time between Conan Doyle and Robertson Nicoll, Shorter's very intimate friend, whom Doyle accused of loading the dice by multiple-reviewing. The Rev. Sir William Robertson Nicoll was a great power in the literary world in those days, with some fine discoveries to his name as Reader for Hodder and Stoughton ; Barrie at their head and ' Ian Maclaren ' as a good second. Nicoll had a Nonconformist paper, the *British Weekly*, where he regularly wrote sermons under his own name, reviews over his initials, a long literary causerie signed ' Claudius Clear ' and a column of literary gossip signed ' A Man of Kent ', and as he also edited the monthly magazine, the *Bookman*, he was able, if he wished, to do a new book a really good turn or a really bad one. Doyle objected to one man having so many chances of exerting influence ; and he said so in no ambiguous terms. Nicoll defended himself with equal vigour, but I rather think that public sympathy was with the novelist.

I remember when Watts-Dunton's Romany romance, *Aylwin*, after years of gestation, was at last ready to be born, Nicoll said : ' There must be no doubt about it ; it *must* succeed ' ; and, since he threw all his composite weight into the campaign, and all his other influence, succeed it did ; but whether or not beyond its deserts I can offer no opinion, for I have never read it.

Nicoll was a remarkable man, sage and cautious, of very sound judgment often almost amounting to clairvoyance. He was exaggeratedly Scotch in his pronunciation, and in conversation had all the machinery of a Carlyle and Johnson in one, but without their commanding quality. For so capable a mind he was, I used to think, far too much interested in gossip. I never heard his sermons, or read them, but I believe they carried great weight ; when among literary men he was not conspicuous for theology.

I wonder what Conan Doyle would think of the tendency to-day to place reviewing in the hands of novelists. Unless they are very much in need of pence, I am of the opinion

that they should be doing their own work and leave this to the professional critics. I am sure, as I say elsewhere in this book, that Arnold Bennett not only wore himself out but dissipated his fine proper resources by devoting, towards the end of his life, so much time to the work of other and usually inferior writers. When I suggested this to him, he took refuge in the reply that the payment was huge; but that was no answer for him to make.

The standard of literary criticism in England has latterly been very high, and the reviewer who was satisfied, in the old phrase, to 'cut the pages and smell the paper-knife' has disappeared. Such is the competition that reviewers (as well as Publishers' Readers) must now give their whole attention to every book or manuscript. The weekly causerie has become a favourite addition to journalism. Perhaps the best example was Gosse's article in the *Sunday Times*, where, confessedly in the manner of Sainte Beuve, he preferred to examine such books as appealed to him, instead of, as he would have done earlier in life, such books as did not. Advancing age, the sunshine of the House of Lords, of which he became Librarian ('They eat out of my hand,' he said of the perusing peers), and lastly his knight-hood, all played a mellowing part, and, feuds behind him, and calling on a large experience of men and letters, he wrote wisely and entertainingly and exercised no little influence. He had, however, in his time, been very vulnerable. I remember Ker's friend, W. P. James, telling me how, on a holiday, when he and Ker were walking across Exmoor towards Minehead, a fog suddenly descended. As they plodded on through it, they saw ahead of them another figure magnified into something inhuman. On catching up with it, it turned out to be Edmund Gosse.

'I couldn't think what you could be,' said Ker: 'whether the Spectre of the Brocken or an Oxford don returning to nature.'

Later in the evening, when they were alone, Ker said to James: 'Did you notice how pleased Gosse was to be taken for an Oxford don—even in a fog?'



## CHAPTER V

### THE *GLOBE*

A promise kept—A momentous Wagner night—Algernon Locker—R. E. Francillon—Counsels on style—'By the Way'—'Captain Grease'—Toil and recreation—Dr. Garnett—The British Museum Reading Room—Thomas Seccombe—Old Book shops—Wanley's *Wonders of the Little World*—Catherine Anwill—William Hone and Rudyard Kipling—The four thrills—A private miscellany—Bertram Dobell—James Thomson and Francis Thompson

F<sup>AIR</sup> promises are made every day by editors to young men who call upon them, and nothing results. Much as I trusted Locker I had not much hope that he could really ever need me at the office. But I was wrong. It was in April 1893 that I had first seen him and received encouragement ; in June my funds gave out and I prepared to return to Brighton and see what would turn up. On my last night in London I went to the gallery of Covent Garden theatre to hear *Tristan und Isolde*. It finished at half-past eleven ; I paused for a tankard at the Kemble's Head, since it was then no crime to purvey liquor till half after midnight, and so began the long walk home, up the Tottenham Court Road, up the Kentish Town Road, up the Highgate Road to the final steepness of West Hill, which in those days was very like the country ; for I was then, after various moves, one of which had taken me to Cowley Street, Westminster, and one to the edge of Parliament Hill, living on the top of Highgate Hill.

It was after one o'clock when, sleepy and weary, I unlocked my door. On the table in the hall was a telegram, 'Please be at the *Globe* office at 9 to-morrow morning.'

I had a restless night, was punctual at the *Globe* office

the next morning, and, although I was wanted only for a fortnight, to fill a sudden gap, remained for several years.

The *Globe* at that time was under the personal control of its proprietor, Sir George Armstrong, an old soldier, who came in every morning to arrange about the leader, which was written by another old soldier, Captain Carlisle. The acting editor, Algernon Locker, was the son of Arthur Locker, who had been editor of the *Graphic* for many years and was the grandson of Nelson's friend Admiral William Locker, afterwards Governor of Greenwich Hospital, and nephew of Frederick Locker, author of *London Lyrics*; latterly known as Locker-Lampson and the father of the present legislators, Godfrey and Oliver.

Another member of the *Globe* was R. E. Francillon, a gentle, distinguished, silent man, whose exact capacity there I cannot recollect. What, however, I do recollect is that he sent for me one morning to his little room to draw my attention to two mistakes in style in one of my articles. I had referred to there being less boats in Boulter's Lock on the previous Sunday than the fine weather would lead one to expect—or had written some such sentence as that. He had altered 'less' to 'fewer', because "'Less'", he said, 'is an adjective of size, not number'; and I am one of the few people who never forget it. The other blunder was a misplaced 'only'. I don't say I have never misplaced 'only' since, for when writing in a hurry it is very easy to do so, especially as, in conversation, to misplace it is the rule; but I have for the most part remembered that too. Two other pointers to sound writing I can recollect, both of which I have tried to bear in mind. 'Style', said A. E. Housman in a lecture at University College, 'is the art of not using italics'; while in the same building W. P. Ker quoted Dr. Johnson as stating that 'repetition is a fault rarely committed by bad writers'. For one who had prefaced his literary career by admiration of George Augustus Sala, this reminder was indeed of value, for one of the office rules of the paper with the 'largest circulation in the world' for

which Sala wrote was that no word should ever be employed twice in the same article ; or at any rate there was a Fleet Street legend to that effect. I remember also that Ker would never let us refer to a coincidence. ' There is no such thing,' he used to say.

My principal work at the *Globe* was to help C. L. Graves with the ' By the Way ' column, which consisted of a dozen or so paragraphs, each with a joke or a sting in it, bearing on the morning's news. No other daily paper had a feature quite of this sort, although in the *Referee* George R. Sims provided unaided a whole page every Sunday. To-day there are columns of paragraphs everywhere, but few that are exclusively epigrammatic ; while the burlesque element has come in, found at its best in the work of ' Beachcomber ' in the *Daily Express*.

It is too late in the day to give examples of ' By the Way ' paragraphs, but here is a sample of my verse on topical events which from time to time found its way into the column :

#### CAPTAIN GREASE

(Founded, with apologies to ' Bab ', upon the story in Thursday's ' By the Way ', of the admiral who advised those of his officers with unruly hair to break an egg on their heads every morning, as he did.)

Of all the ships upon the blue,  
No ship contained a sleeker crew,  
Than that of tidy Captain Grease,  
Commander of the Golden Fleece.

He was admired by all his men,  
For glossy Captain Grease, R.N.,  
Promoted with unceasing care  
The silky softness of his hair.

His poll emitted such a ray  
That passing craft went oft astray,  
Since when they'd take the sun, instead  
They took the Captain's glitt'ring head.

This capillose development  
Provoked the crew to discontent,  
But vain their efforts to attain  
The lambent lustre of his mane.

At length, in the acutest stage  
Of gnawing jealousy and rage,  
They fixed on William Baldwin, cox,  
To crave the secret of his locks.

He faced the Captain like a man,  
The Captain answered, "'Tis my plan  
To break each morn at half-past eight,  
A new laid egg upon my pate.'

'A new laid egg!' the coxswain cried,  
'New laid is wisest,' Grease replied :  
'Thus treat your curls and they will shine  
With all the radiance of mine.'

Straightway the Golden Fleece's men  
Sequestered each a fruitful hen,  
And soon there was not any where  
Such opulence of dazzling hair.

I find also, in a commonplace book, the following grisly parody :

#### THE VILLAGE TOOTHSMITH

(By LONGBELLOW)

('Dental surgery had made enormous advances since his boyhood, when, he remembered, the following announcement appeared over the entrance to a blacksmith's forge which he once visited. "Tooth-drawing, bleeding, and cupping done here." The instrument used was called a pelican, and had a strong, sharp, hooked beak.'—Mr. J. W. HULKE, F.R.S., at the Dental Hospital dinner.)

Under the spreading gum-tree's shade  
The village smithy stands,  
The smith a busy man is he,  
For when frail flesh demands,  
He cups and bleeds and pulls out teeth  
With his large and sinewy hands.

Week in, week out, from morn to night  
 You may see his clients there,  
 Bound hand and foot to the anvil—  
 For he owns not any chair—  
 Squealing, squirming, as he swings  
 The pelican in air.

Its beak is sharp and hooked and strong  
 To stir the stumps of man ;  
 You shall not see so weird a thing  
 From Crewe to Matapan ;  
 They look the whole world in the mouth,  
 He and his pelican.

The children coming home from school  
 Look in at the smithy door ;  
 They love to see the pelican  
 And hear the patients roar,  
 And catch the double teeth that fall  
 Like hailstones on the floor.

Other members of the *Globe* staff were Lieutenant Armstrong, now Sir George, son of the proprietor ; Michael Temple, who had charge of the 'Men and Matters' column ; and E. Kay Robinson, who had done journalistic work in India with Kipling and was the dedicatee of *Life's Handicap* : 'To K.R. from R.K.' Kay Robinson, later the founder of the *Country-side*, was a brother of Phil Robinson, who used to look in now and then : a big man with a soft voice, and a charming essayist, chiefly about animals, who suffered, like Temple, from what might be called now, when Freud rules so many vocabularies, a club-lounge complex. Later Clarence Rook joined the 'By the Way' staff : still another man who did not fully employ his many gifts. Temple, I recall, a man of wide erudition, used to look at me through his spectacles after I had helped him out with a 'Men and Matters' paragraph, and say, 'Squinny'—this was a portmanteau word, of which Quaker was an ingredient—'Squinny, there's only one thing more surprising than the things you know, and that is the

things you don't know.' After the *Globe* ceased, Temple became a free-lance and wrote one or two books, not unlike Phil Robinson's, about natural history. When he died, all too soon, he was a mainstay of the *Referee*.

I never rightly understood why the *Globe* ceased. But suddenly London seemed to tire of buying evening papers, and first five and then four and now three were found to be sufficient. But the *Globe* ought to have remained.

I can't believe it possible for any young man intending to live by his pen to have had a better chance than the *Globe* gave me, for not only was I quickly promoted to write a regular short leader of a light character, and to take over Saturday's 'Literary Gossip', but the 'Turnover' column was at my disposal whenever I had an article ready. All that was to the good; and the salary was sufficient for my needs. The *Globe* indeed enabled me to open a banking account, and I remember that the first cheque I drew was made out for a million pounds, to my old schoolfellow, Wilfred Whitten, now known all the world over as John o' London and the Editor of the most popular literary weekly paper that England has ever produced. He did not present the cheque but had it framed.

More important still, the *Globe* hours were only from nine till a quarter-past eleven, the rest of the day being mine to spend exactly as I would: in the British Museum Reading Room, in visiting the old book-shops, in exploring London, in exploring Greater London, or, on match days, sitting at Lord's or the Oval.

But for the *Globe's* easy hours, which made it possible for me to be regularly in the Reading Room of the British Museum, I could not have done a quarter of the work I have done. There, in Bloomsbury, was my real Alma Mater. I suppose that, with the exception of Saturdays, Sundays and brief holidays (and during its own intolerable closing-times), I was in the British Museum Reading Room every day for three or four years. In those early 'nineties Dr. Garnett was still the Keeper of the Printed Books: a tall, thin man with a grey head, a weedy beard and absent-minded spectacles,

who drifted about the room in a venerable tall hat and frock coat, looking as unlike the author of *The Twilight of the Gods* as might be. Few tall hats could have covered so much lore and learning, and wherever the Doctor's thoughts might be, the humblest reader was welcome to interrupt them.

Closing my eyes, I can see with extraordinary clearness the principal habitués of my time, led by the Hayti Plenipotentiary, an easy one to re-create, for he was a huge man of profound blackness, with a black beard, a black hat, a black suit and a black-rimmed monocle hanging by a broad black ribbon, whose particular branch of study I never ascertained, and who sometimes was accompanied by a subservient fellow Republican, also in full morning dress, but not quite so remorseless in his nigritude. Then there was Miss O'Connor, the lame lady with the fuzzy hair and long nose and side-long walk, who carried a box with a picture of Nydia, the blind girl, on the lid, and spent most of the day in visiting her friends at other desks. And the old dandy of military bearing and threadbare clothes from whose proud chest the *Times*, the gentleman's threepenny paper, always protruded—but alas! when you were near enough to read the date, it turned out to be years old. I rather fancy that he was one of those necessary drudges, a sermon-copier. And then there was an authority on Shakespeare's Sonnets whose other title to fame was the possession of the largest wen I ever shuddered at. And white-haired Mrs. Salmon, who led the little army of copyists at twopence a folio; and Thomas Seccombe, Sidney Lee's assistant on the *Dictionary of National Biography*, who seemed to me to be the most overworked man in London and yet always had time in which to fan a new enthusiasm or to write a long letter; and various contributors to the *Dictionary*, who found contiguity to Seccombe, the kindly and informative, of no little advantage, chief among whom I visualize Miss Fell Smith and J. M. Rigg. And at a neighbouring desk, there was usually Whitten, probably, like me, on the Turnover hunt or the anthology trail: for, always an impassioned Londoner, even before he became

John o' that city, he was compiling an admirable collection called *London in Song*. As my friend H. C. Beeching, afterwards Dean of Norwich, wrote :

' It all comes out of the books we read  
And it all goes into the books we write.'

Whitten and I often lunched together at the Vienna Café, which then occupied the thin end of the wedge between New Oxford Street and Hart Street, and was the regular eating-place of some of the Museum staff, among them Barclay Squire, R. A. Streatfield and Laurence Binyon, who now has his own residence within the precincts—in fact, Colvin's old house, described by Stevenson as

' The many-pillared and the well-beloved '.

Seccombe, after being out of England too long in some Professorial capacity, came back in 1923 only to die. I saw him in a Nursing Home in Dorset Square and the next day he was off to Torquay and I gave him a letter of introduction to Eden Phillpotts, who has long been Lord of that resort. But it was too late.

To the old book-shops I paid regular calls, spending hours over the fourpenny boxes and often finding odd treasures. They had no market value—I have never in my life made a discovery of any financial worth—but they were out-of-the-ordinary, and the more out-of-the-ordinary they were, the better I liked them.

I can give a very good example of my occasional luck at the old booksellers. It may be remembered by students of Browning that there was a curious miscellany in his father's library called *The Wonders of the Little World*, compiled by a seventeenth-century parson named Nathaniel Wanley, in which the poet found more than one suggestion for his works. In the biography of Browning begun by W. Hall Griffin and completed by H. C. Minchin, is the following passage :

' . . . It was in Wanley that he read of the " prestigious feats almost incredible " of " Johannes Teutonicus, a Canon of Halberstadt in Germany ", who reappears in *Tran-*



*scandalism* among the *Men and Women* of 1855 as the "stout mage" John of Halberstadt who "vents a brace of rhymes", and forthwith the roses spring up "over us, under, round us every side". It was in Wanley that he read as a boy how "Pope Stephen the Seventh, having been hindered from the Popedom by Formosus, his predecessor, when after his death he was made Pope, caused his fingers to be cut off, and to be cast into the river for the fish to devour"; and this incident, which Browning's father used to relate to his children as they sat upon his knee, afterwards became the theme of the first hundred and fifty lines of the Pope's noble speech in *The Ring and the Book*. Nor does the influence of Wanley cease in 1869 with *The Ring and the Book*; twenty years later in *Asolando*, the last volume Browning published, appeared the lines called *The Cardinal and the Dog*, which tell how, at the Council of Trent, Cardinal Crescentio sat writing letters when

"A black dog of vast bigness, eyes flaming, ears that hung  
Down to the very ground almost, into the chamber sprung  
And made directly for him, and laid himself right under  
The table where Crescentio wrote—who called in fear and wonder  
His servants in the ante-room, commanded everyone  
To look for and find out the beast; but, looking, they found none."

In regard to which incident Browning declares, "I give mine author's very words: he penned, I reindite." How far this is the case may be judged from the following from "mine author", Wanley:

"Crescentius the Pope's Legate at the Council of Trent, 1552, March 25, was busie writing of Letters of the Pope till it was far in the night, whence rising to refresh himself, he saw a black dog of a vast bigness, flaming eyes, ears that hung down almost to the ground enter the room, which came directly towards him, and laid himself down under the table. Frightened at the sight, he called his Servants in the Anti-chamber (*sic*), commanded them to look for the Dog, but they could find none. The Cardinal fell melancholy, thence sick, and died at Verona: on his death-bed he cried out to drive away the Dog that leaped upon his bed."

These lines, however, although not published till 1889, were written in 1842 for little Willie Macready, at the same

time as the *Pied Piper*; but there is a later example of the survival of Wanley to be mentioned. In 1883 Browning's *Jocoseria* appeared, the name being taken from "such rubbish as Melander's *Jocoseria*", as that volume had been termed in a note to *Paracelsus*; for, like the works of Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, Otto Melander's dumpy little Latin volume of eleven hundred pages of seventeenth-century jest and anecdote was on the bookshelves at Southampton Street. Browning, having been taken to task for his literary shortcomings, replied to his critics at the close of his volume of 1883, and the reply was in the form of a metrical version of an anecdote from Wanley:

"Pambo came to a learned man, and desired him to teach him some Psalm: he began to read to him the thirty-ninth, and the first verse, which is: 'I said I will look to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.' Pambo shut the book, and took his leave, saying 'he would learn that point'. And having absented himself some months, he was demanded by his teacher, 'When he would go forward?' He answered 'that he had not yet learned his old lesson—to speak in such a manner as not to offend with his tongue'."

Browning in 1883 genially saluted his forerunner as a brother—"Arcades ambo sumus"; for fifty years he said, in substance, I have done my best—

"Yet much the same  
Offend with my tongue—like Pambo!"

It is singular, therefore, that Wanley's curious book has been consistently neglected by students of Browning.

Well, I had bought in Brighton a copy of Wanley's *Wonders*, a rare book, too big for profitable reprinting, when I was about seventeen, and found it of absorbing interest; and when in 1909 Griffin was beginning his biography and spoke to me about Wanley, it was my copy that he used. It illustrates the difference between the ordinary reader and the man of genius that Wanley to me was merely an entertaining assemblage of strange characters and occurrences and to Browning a source of inspiration.

But my 'finds' could lead to print too, although not the print of a poet and 'writer of plays', and the inquisitive and

reverend old Nathaniel led to a good many 'Turnover guineas. And I once fished from a fourpenny box a manuscript collection of Restoration poetry which seemed to be worth preservation, the result being my second publication. My friend Arthur Humphreys, the bookman, who was then in control of Hatchard's in Piccadilly, brought it out in exquisite miniature form, under the title *Catherine Anwill—Her Book*. My introduction and some prefatory couplets were signed L. I have seen this little amorous work, which in places might then have been called rather free but would be voted prudish to-day, in second-hand catalogues at a high price.

Although Wanley was very useful to me when I was in difficulties with a Turnover, the best author or compiler for that kind of work was the trustworthy Hone, whose *Year Book*, *Table Book* and *Everyday Book* could always be counted upon to pave the way to twenty-one shillings. Such was my own experience; and, only the other day in Kipling's library at Burwash, it was very stimulating, when I had remarked on the presence of these volumes on his shelves, to be told by him that he too used to rely on Hone when preparing Turnovers for his newspaper in India, before, still hardly more than a boy, he burst gloriously into the West.

No literary event of my time was as remarkable as that advent. In my reading career there have been four great thrills, of which Kipling contributed one and not the least. The first came with the meeting of Athos, Porthos, Aramis and d'Artagnan; the second with the arrival of Mr. Jack Hamlin and Mr. John Oakhurst ('He rastled with it, the d . . . d little cuss'); the third when I found in *Macmillan's Magazine* in December 1889 a gorgeous story entitled 'The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney'; and the fourth—the fourth came much later, only a few years ago, in the glow communicated by O. Henry. Whether 'A Municipal Report' is, or is not, O. Henry's supreme achievement—here is material for an after-dinner discussion which should make the small hours arrive unperceived.

To return to my book-hunting saunterings, let me say,

· sadly, that old-book-shops were old-book-shops then. To-day they are recent-book-shops and have become as repugnant to me as they were then inviting. Contemporary books were comparatively rare, and as for books in their wrappers, such as now clutter up the shelves, they were unknown. I speak of a time when leather-bound books were the rule and it was impossible not to find, within a few moments, copies of Glover's *Leonidas*, Thomson's *Seasons* and Falconer's *Shipwreck*.

Next to the paper wrappers or jackets, it is the presence of remainders that is the ruin of the modern second-hand book-shop ; books more or less written to be remainders, as certain articles, notably field-glasses and opera-glasses, are made to be sold by pawnbrokers. Some good books, no doubt, written before their time or after their time or above the public's head, have finished as remainders ; but for the most part remainders are a proof of publishers' optimism. The only first-class remainder that I can remember is Dr. Garnett's *Twilight of the Gods*, of which there was in the eighteen-nineties a stock in Glaisher's in Holborn. I bought two or three, and W. P. Ker bought the rest. The flavour of the work so fascinated me that I wrote an article on it in the *Academy* which caused John Lane to reprint it, with additions. But the additions had not the quality of the original stories.

When Giblin, my University College friend, having finished with King's and mathematics, left Cambridge to try his luck in the Klondyke and wrote back for a pocketable book of mixed reading, not instantly exhaustible, I sent him a composite volume made up of three or four stories from *The Twilight of the Gods* ('Abdullah the Adite' is one of them), the *Song of Solomon*, *Omar Khayyam*, *Candide*, the *Apocrypha* and Stevenson's *Fables*, all cut to size and bound together in limp leather. But he never got it, some postal official having detected its merits and made it his own. There would now be a little more material in this genre to choose from ; but not much, for it is a rare growth. Norman Douglas's *Alone* would afford a few choice pages, while *South*

*Wind* might be trusted to the post entire. There is no living writer of prose whom I taste with more relish than this ironical unfaltering searcher after beauty and fearless despiser of all that is taken for granted.

In those days—the middle and late 'nineties—Holywell Street and Wych Street still stood, making interesting and human a district now given up to vast blocks of offices, mercantile, Australian and bleak. Regular visits to Holywell Street were rendered necessary by the presence there of Charles Hindley's book-shop, where you not only could talk with a bookseller who was an author—he was the historian of the Catnach Press—but were liable to find yourself in excellent bibliomaniac company, Mr. Gladstone himself being an habitu  . But the best place to look for the G.O.M. as a book-hunter was at Westall's in Oxford Street, where I am told he always insisted upon his ten per cent.

It was in 1901 that the two narrow lanes—for they were no more—were demolished, taking with them an irrecoverable section of my London. With her compensation money Mrs. Hindley very prudently built a house in Sussex, where she still lives and cherishes memories of the old times.

Among the London second-hand booksellers who became my friends I must mention chiefly Bertram Dobell, who was to be found in the back room of his shop in Charing Cross Road in the midst of rare tracts and manuscripts, which he fondled and caressed and, even as your hand reached out for them, put back on the shelves. For he was more than a mere bookseller: he was a reader too, an enthusiast, a poet and a discoverer. With his long hair, his shaggy beard and his short thick figure, he was like a bear in a cave, surrounded by honey. One of his finds provided him with a place of his own in literature, for it was he who, two and a half centuries after they were written, gave the world the rapt mystical communings of Thomas Traherne. But that came later. When I first knew Dobell he was more concerned with Lamb, and he used to tell me about James Thomson, whose friend and executor and editor he was—James Thom-

son, the author of that noble melancholy testament, *The City of Dreadful Night*, which I had long known.

Poor Thomson, although one of his short lyrics has more of the joy of living compressed into it than any poem I know, was far from happy. He began gaily enough, but through the death of the girl he loved—'Give a man a girl he can love'—he became the victim of nervous depression and despair and in the end of the anodyne, drink. Well, Dobell was James Thomson's guardian angel—so far as anyone was allowed to be—and he toiled to make his work better known. *The City of Dreadful Night* had many choice admirers, George Meredith not least in those days and at the present moment Rudyard Kipling, who once borrowed the title, and J. L. Garvin, who has the widest knowledge of humane literature and the finest appreciation of it of any man I know. I wish he could spare time from the affairs of state to write more criticism.

Oddly enough, there was considerable superficial resemblance between Thomson (James) and Thompson (Francis). Both were poets. Both were beaten by the great hard world; unfitted for it. Both found their nepenthes. But the likeness ceases here; for whereas James Thomson saw no hope anywhere, Francis Thompson found the Star of Bethlehem reflected in every puddle. James Thomson I knew only through his books, which include a high-spirited prose work of defiant impiety called *Satires and Profanities*, and through Dobell's conversation; but Francis Thompson I knew personally and, shutting my eyes, can reconstruct at any moment: a shrunken figure in a long yellow ulster, which he wore even at midsummer, with a straggling beard, a little red nose as inadequate as Coleridge's, and an unconquerable soul. He never said an unworthy thing, he never wrote a commonplace line. If a genius is a man who does unique things of which nobody would expect him to be capable—and that is not a much worse definition than the stock one about the infinite capacity for taking pains (which is within the reach of every dullard)—then Francis Thompson was a genius. 'There goes a dreamer,' you might have

said, seeing him drifting along the street with a bag full of books for review, or 'There goes an unworldly creature down on his luck'; but few would have said, 'There goes a spiritual and inspired poet whose work will endure.' It is an odd thought about Dobell—that his two special poets, Traherne, the visionary, and James Thomson, the agnostic, might, if combined, have written something very like *The Hound of Heaven*.

I had in those early days far more books than I have now, and it was easier then than now for a youth with little money to form a library, because books were cheaper. There was, for example, a series published by Cassell and edited by Henry Morley, containing all the English standard works, at only threepence a volume, in paper, or sixpence in cloth. There was a firm called Walter Scott with a shilling edition of the poets. But, as all my life I have preferred to find a book by searching for it rather than by asking for it over the counter, the best things on my shelves came from the second-hand shops, and the stalls in the Farringdon Road and Aldgate.

These cheap books, however, though they delivered the goods, were not beautiful. It was not till the rise of the American pirate Thomas B. Mosher that I was able to possess beautiful books. So far as I can recollect, the circumstance that he disregarded the law of copyright did not disturb me in the least. I liked his distinguished little pamphlets too much—and even more I liked the new territories to which they pointed the way, the unknown palaces of which they were single stones. I suppose that Thomas B. Mosher was a scamp, but his nefariousness was very gracious and stimulating. And he did not stimulate merely readers; many an honest publisher must have been spurred to better deeds by the Terror of the (Portland) Maine.

Although the shilling has lost its power, the best old books are still very cheap and there is no excuse for borrowing anything that can be bought in the Everyman Library or the World's Classics, to mention only these two wonderful series. I rank the foundation by Dent of the little Temple

Shakespeare, so pocketable and warm, among the milestones in my life.

‘Now Barabbas,’ said my friend Ponsonby Ogle, pretending to be writing as Whistler on an occasion to which I refer later—‘now Barabbas was a re-publisher’; but what is there left for Barabbas to do? In the multiplicity of reprints that now load the booksellers’ shelves, bringing them, I fear, more embarrassment than profit, everything old that is worth a second time on earth must have been considered.



Alas! dear Charles, those old old days  
 I see with half regretful gaze.  
 (Not that I'm tired of these).  
 I do not love to hoard, but still—  
 There is a joy, say what you will,  
 In hard-earned luxuries.'

—Thus Bridget. So it is with me.  
 I long to own all that I see  
 That's quaint, and rare, and fine.  
 It does not need so very much,  
 Say Croesus' Wealth, or Midas' Touch,  
 Or Mackay's Silver mine.

Some moralists declare, 'tis true—  
 That those who keep a goal in view,  
 And those whose means are very few,  
 Enjoy this life alone.  
 They say that wealth's the Devil's dower,  
 And Rich men live but for the hour.  
 (Most probably the grapes are sour,  
 And hence this dismal moan).

A modest hundred pounds per ann.  
 Should be enough for any man  
 To spend on curios.  
 More satisfaction can belong  
 To things you purchase 'for a song',  
 Than those bought 'through the nose'.

And yet—in spite of what I've said  
 To run down wealth, and praise instead  
 The poor man's meagre pay—  
 In spite of all—I should not mind  
 To see what sorrow I could find  
 Along the 'Primrose way'.

To return to Bernard Barton, in order to be conscientious it was necessary for me to visit Woodbridge, where for many years he had been a clerk in Alexander's bank—the Alexanders being an old Quaker family (whose bank, like that of

my own Lucas ancestors' at Hitchin, is now absorbed by Barclay's), and this in itself was not only a pleasant thing to do but it practically exhausted the total remuneration for the book. Woodbridge is a quiet town on the Deben in Suffolk—the placid river to which Barton addressed stanzas and on which FitzGerald sailed his boat. My purpose was to reconnoitre the ground, to talk with Mr. Glyde, the bookseller, whose memory went back a long way, and to meet Miss Ellen Churchyard, daughter of Tom Churchyard the local lawyer, Barton and FitzGerald's crony and fellow picture-collector, who was a devotee of Constable and painted not too badly himself. Miss Churchyard was a sprightly little lady of great age, living in a small house in the town, while her sister was acting as the civic librarian.

At Woodbridge I found local colour ; at Croydon, where Barton's daughter Lucy, FitzGerald's widow, was living, and whither I went every week for some months, I obtained first-hand facts. Mrs. FitzGerald, although then in the late 'eighties, had all her faculties but locomotion. She sat, massively and with dignity, in her chair, among her father's pictures and books—a 'Mere at Evening' by Old Crome, a 'Market-place' by Cotman, his portrait by Samuel Laurence, while over the mantelpiece was the identical representation of the little boy learning to read at his mother's knee which in 1827 Lamb and Tom Hood together framed for their friend, and which Hood said he was bound to like because, the frame being too big, it was like the Quaker B. B. himself: 'broad-brimmed'. Here the old lady sat in state, attended by an admirable maid named Sutton, and beside her, on her work-table, a folding leather frame containing a carte-de-visite photograph of her elusive lord E.F.G.

The story of the marriage of the shy, wilful, whimsical, eccentric Edward FitzGerald, who was proud of the streak of insanity in his paternal family, and the strong-minded direct daughter of the Quaker poet, is common property, but since I came a little nearer to it than most people and heard about it from two of the bridegroom's friends as dissimilar as Nelly Churchyard and W. Aldis Wright, there is

no harm in setting it down once more. Until 1849, when her father died, Lucy Barton lived a busy and very useful life in the sleepy Suffolk town. But then came unforeseen changes. When nearing his end, Barton had asked his friend and neighbour, FitzGerald—'Little Grange', where FitzGerald kept his doves, is but a few steps from the old bank house where Barton dwelt—if he would act as his executor and look after Lucy Barton's interests; and FitzGerald, who was then forty, though the prospect cannot have delighted his cloistral mind, consented. But the time having come to carry out the task, he was confronted by difficulties. The poet had left so little for his daughter to live upon, and this fact so distressed FitzGerald, that he thought it his duty to propose marriage to her and thus ensure her comfort by giving her as her husband an allowance which she would be unwilling to accept under other conditions. He did so, and she accepted, but after a short experimental period the two parted, to meet no more. I have heard it said that the marriage of those who are like each other is often doomed to disaster; but dissimilarity can be overdone. FitzGerald needed a helpmate as little as any man; Lucy Barton was resolute and independent; proud too, and so perplexed by it all as to be wounded and hurt. FitzGerald behaved with generosity in the matter of alimony, but he refused even to dream of a reunion. His wife, on the contrary, believed that such a reunion was possible, if remote; and she held to the hope until her husband's death for ever dashed it from her. That he would send for her at the end, she had always believed.

Miss Ellen Churchyard, who in her youth must have been a most attractive animated girl and who was much in FitzGerald's confidence, told me some amusing things. 'Do you know what marriage is, Nelly?' he said to her not long after the wedding. 'I'll tell you. It's standing at your desk all ready for your work, with your brain clear, and then seeing the door open and a great big bonnet asking you to go for a walk with it.'

Years later Mr. and Mrs. FitzGerald met in a Suffolk lane.

‘I saw her coming, Nelly,’ he said, ‘and she saw me. There was no escape for either of us, unless we had turned and run. But I walked on, and as we drew level I took off my hat and made a low bow and said, “I hope I see you well, Mrs. FitzGerald,” and passed on before she could reply.’ Not a husband for any woman, and least of all, perhaps, for this stern, four-square Quaker governess. That was their last encounter.

Nelly Churchyard must have been a favourite with the difficult Orientalist, for when his friend Alfred Tennyson or his friend W. M. Thackeray, both of whom had been at Trinity with him, came down to Woodbridge for the night, he would invite her to hide behind a screen and hear the illustrious men talk. She entrusted to my charge an album containing original drawings by Thackeray and letters from Tennyson and other valuable autographs given to her by FitzGerald, to sell for her in London, for she was finding it hard to make both ends meet ; and through a firm of agents I was able to secure an American purchaser.

It was Mrs. FitzGerald’s association with Charles Lamb that made it a privilege to talk with her. Her hand, which greeted me every Thursday afternoon, was the same hand that Lamb had held in his. She would recall her early life, so filled with Eliana, by the hour. ‘B. B.’ had prized Lamb’s letters, and was proud indeed of being the great man’s correspondent and confidant, and his daughter maintained that pride. Every letter that Lamb ever wrote to the Woodbridge poet was carefully preserved by her in a morocco portfolio which she had had made to hold them, and I was allowed to fondle them as I would. They are now in the British Museum. It was to Lucy Barton that Elia wrote his album verses beginning

‘Little book surnamed of white’,

ending with the pretty stanza—

‘Whitest thoughts in whitest dress,  
Candid meanings, best express  
Mind of quiet Quakeress.’

It was for her that he wrote the letter, in alternate inks, which Thackeray raised to his lips exclaiming 'Saint Charles !'

As an example of the mental vigour which Mrs. Fitzgerald retained almost to the end may be quoted a passage or so from the account of a visit paid by herself and her father to Charles Lamb in Colebrooke Row in the early twenties which she prepared for my book. This Mrs. Fitzgerald wrote from memory with her own hand in the autumn of 1893—a very remarkable feat—and if I quote it here it is because that book made no mark and quickly ceased to be.

'It was rarely my lot to be in town with my dear father, but on one memorable occasion we made a call on Charles Lamb. It must have been not long after his removal to Colebrooke Row. We did not see Miss Lamb, and the visit must have taken place during one of those sad lapses which so often shadowed the lives of the brother and sister. Charles Lamb had given my father to understand that his house was near the New River—"rather elderly by this time", he said—and knowing what had happened to his short-sighted friend George Dyer, we knew that it could not be far off. Having left our omnibus and walked for some distance, we were rather at a loss to find our way, but meeting a postman the house was soon found. Some very high and narrow steps led up to the door, and our rap was answered by the master himself in decidedly morning undress. The door opened at once into the room in which he was sitting. He had evidently been reading, for a large, old volume had been laid aside open on a small table drawn close to the fireside. I cannot remember whether his hair was grey. I think not ; but there could be no forgetting the slight figure and the bright eyes which welcomed us. An old portrait hung over the fireplace ; I know it was of some noteworthy person, whose name I cannot remember.

But what chiefly attracted me was a large old bookcase full of books ! I could but think how many long walks must have been taken to bring them home, for there were but few that did not bear the mark of having been bought at many a bookstall : brown, dark-looking books, distin-

guished by those white tickets which told how much their owner had given for each. Readers of Lamb will remember the home-bringing of that long-wished-for copy of Beaumont and Fletcher, which, we are told, after long consideration of what saving could be hit upon that would be an equivalent to the purchase, was dragged home late one Saturday night, the happy possessor only "wishing it were more cumbersome". But when more favourable times came, and a set of rare old blue china could be indulged in, how touching was the sister's backward look at the old times, its trials, and its compensations! She wishes those times would come again "when we were not quite so rich; I do not mean that I want to be poor, but a thing was worth buying then when we felt the money that we paid for it". How beautiful is the brother's loving quickness at "detecting these summer clouds in Bridget". But I must leave off reading that essay for my own pleasure, and end my scanty memories of that visit.

I wish I could recall what passed that day! I only remember that the talk was of books, of authors, of Southey especially, and of reviews. I cannot remember how long we were there. A luncheon of oysters, with its usual accompaniments, was brought in; our hospitable host equipped himself for a walk, and went with us until he saw us into the right omnibus, and with cordial farewells that memorable morning ended.

I believe that once again I saw that bookcase. I was taken by some friends to call on Miss Lamb some little time after her brother's death. When I was introduced to her, a chair was placed for me close to her own. She took my hand, looked intently at me (my dress happened to be of blue muslin) and stroked down my skirts once or twice, saying, with a look of surprise and perhaps of slight reproach, "*Bernard Barton's daughter!*" But I think she soon forgave my un-Quakerly appearance, for she presently took my arm, and led me up to a bookcase, before which we paced up and down, now and then stopping to look at it, and even to touch it. Surely at that moment we both remembered Colebrook Row!

—That was written in 1893, when Mrs. FitzGerald, though deaf and house-ridden, had still her faculties. Two or three

years afterwards second childhood came swiftly, following a change of home which she was very loth to make. Her memory then failed almost entirely. Hence her active life may be said to have ended with 1895.

One other of the young acquaintances of Elia it was my lot to meet, also an old lady: Mrs. Elizabeth Coe of Widdford, whom W. J. Craig, the Shakespearean scholar, and I visited one afternoon when there was still just time, and whose recollections I incorporated in my *Life of Lamb*. Thus two hands that had been held by his have touched mine.

In an interview with me published in Messrs. W. H. Smith's monthly bulletin *The Book Window*, in 1930, the story of the beginnings of *Bernard Barton and His Friends* is amplified. The commission coming through Whitten, it was to him that the manuscript had to be delivered. I forget the date on which I promised to deliver it, but I remember this, that I faithfully carried it just before midnight to Whitten's house, and, as I could get no response to knocks and rings, deposited it (as though it were a baby at the Foundling Hospital) on the doorstep, where it was found the next morning with the milk.

Looking again through this interview I find that I remarked in it on a problem which still never ceases to occupy my mind; in fact it becomes more pressing.

'What really would interest me would be to see', I seem to have said, 'not the people who buy books, but the people who don't. For it is the way that books do not sell that is the problem. In all these populous British Isles, full of readers, first-class books can be published and not a thousand copies be asked for. When I was seventeen, although with very little pocket-money, I bought in a year more books than would represent a whole edition of new works by several living authors who have a great reputation.'

'As to the influences which help to create the greater successes, I attach the highest importance to conversation at the dinner-table. And think of the results which have followed the example of persons in high places. It was one



C. I. GRAVES

E. V. LUCAS

GEORGE MORROW

*In 1906*



A. A. MILNE

E. H. SHEPARD

*Author and Illustrator of the Christopher Robin books, 1924-1932*

STUDIES IN COLLABORATION





WILLIAM ARCHER

of Mr. Gladstone's post-cards of praise that sent everyone to *Robert Elsmere*. But we have a more recent example in the case of Mr. Baldwin and Mary Webb.'

'Apropos of Prime Ministers and books, did you invent the remark you attribute to Mr. Gladstone?' the interviewer asked.

'Where?' I replied. 'I can't remember it. I have written so much—too much. Can you point out the place?'

A copy of *Over Bemerton's* being produced, the passage was duly indicated. It read thus:

'It was Mr. Gladstone who made the suggestion to Mr. Bemerton that booksellers should open at night. "The time for second-hand book-shops," he said, "is after one's work, not during one's work. I should like to stroll round this way after the House rose, even in the small hours of the morning, and spend a quarter of an hour by your shelves. So would most of the Members of the House. It would pay you."

"If you will announce it, sir, in a speech, I will do so," said Mr. Bemerton, and the great man laughed.'

'Yes,' I had to confess, 'I invented that; and Bemerton's retort illustrates my point about the value of recommendation from the type of statesman in whose judgement people have confidence.

'As to booksellers,' I continued, 'I recall an excellent device I saw in a big book-shop in Chicago, in the days when people there put reading before shooting each other. Immediately facing the entrance stood a small case in which a dozen or so volumes were displayed, with a show-card stating that those were the books which were most in demand at the moment. I passed on the idea to a prominent bookseller in London, but he never adopted it. As we are all liable to a little snobbishness, and are prone to read what others are reading, it seemed to me that the plan was worth trying.

'Perhaps', I concluded, 'the habit of buying books will come back; but I wonder. The book has so many enemies,

or at any rate, rivals, to-day. First and foremost, the newspapers and weekly papers, which do so much of the book's work ; then the B.B.C., which saves one the trouble of reading. These are the competitors ; the actual foes are the theatre, the cinema, bridge, dancing and the late William Willett.'

To this I would add now the remark that it is amazing how little the public desire to possess books. I am not referring to novels, which for the most part are designed to beguile only for a few hours and are thus fittingly enough obtained through circulating libraries ; I mean the books to which one would like to return. As a case in point, I will take my own compilation of the flower of other minds, *The Open Road*, and I take it, I hope without offence, because it has been the most popular of my works. Since its publication in 1899, between eighty and ninety thousand copies have been sold. Glancing casually at a really successful book, the *A B C Railway Guide*, I note that the population of Wigan is 85,357 ; so that the complete issue of *The Open Road* to date could be swallowed up in that one not very large town and not a single copy be left for the rest of the world. The moral is, I fear, that if an author wants to be read, he must write for the Press.

The memoir of Bernard Barton was published in a small edition at the end of 1893 and no second edition was called for. It had, however, its repercussions : it led, a few years later, to a commission from Reginald Smith of Smith & Elder to edit some newly discovered letters from Lamb to the Lloyd family ; and that task, when completed, led to an invitation from the head of the firm of Methuen to write a new Life of Lamb and to bring out a new edition of his works.

The Bernard Barton book brought a meeting at the *Globe* office with Frederick Locker-Lampson, who was calling on his nephew, the editor, and later he sent me a signed copy of his own *Patchwork*. This was honour enough, for I had always liked the *London Lyrics*, and although I had not yet seen it, knew all about the Rowfant library, and its catalogue,

with Cruikshank's frontispiece, so desired by collectors ; but a greater honour was to follow, in the shape of a long and very kind letter from Swinburne, dropping from a clear sky, thanking me for the pleasure that my biography had given him. It is sad that this letter, perhaps the most momentous that I have ever received, no longer exists. It perished together with that other about Ann and Jane Taylor to which I have referred : in the most foolish way, in the kind of accident which turns good men into sceptics. An accumulation of unwanted papers having occurred, I gave instructions to the house-boy to burn these and these only. In his native zeal, or in a mood of destructive exaltation produced by the flames, he burned everything he could find.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCERNING LAMB

Reginald Smith—*Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*—A rascally Lake poet '—Algernon Methuen—W. J. Craig—Norman Moore—Stephen Gwynn—Lamb's MSS.—W. Carew Hazlitt—An evening visit to 'The Pines'—Swinburne and Watts-Dunton

**B**UT for *Bernard Barton and His Friends* I should not, I feel sure, have been asked, some years later, by Smith, Elder & Co., to prepare the book called *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*. I remember, with peculiar distinctness, my visit to Reginald Smith, because he behaved exactly like the publisher of tradition ; that is to say, he was very formal and important at his desk, he said some nice things to me and then proposed that I should do the work of reading these letters and making a volume out of them for nothing. His actual words were 'Silver and gold have I none'. I was bewildered, and was barely reassured by his next remark, which was that to carry through such a task for such an illustrious and historic firm would be of enormous assistance to a young man at the outset of his career. Having already some idea of what research is needed for a work of this kind, I was forced, much against my own wishes, to decline ; whereupon he said that if I made two or three articles for the *Cornhill* out of the letters they would be paid for at the rate of a guinea a page ; and thus it was settled. But I was shocked to find such an attitude in an office which had done not so badly out of Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë, and whose head, George Smith, could from his own pocket finance that magnificent work the *Dictionary of National Biography*, to which I am so devoted that I have had portable cases made

for the India-paper edition and never travel without them.

Reginald Smith, however, though in his office he showed me only a parsimonious side, was, in his own home in Park Street, the most generous of hosts. Never in a private house have I dined so well as with him. He was no blood relation to George Smith, but had married his daughter Marion, and had come to publishing from the Bar, where he wore silk. Although no doubt he read most of the books his firm published, he had but one literary passion and that was for Trollope.

The new letters in *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds* were not of the highest value. It takes two to make a correspondence, and the Lloyds were not sufficiently akin to the author of the essay on Imperfect Sympathies. The best letter—that to Robert Lloyd on the joys of London—is a paraphrase of the famous one to Wordsworth on the same subject. But among the documents was a letter from Wordsworth himself which I printed with almost too much eagerness, and which, since the book had a very small sale and is out of print, I may quote here. But first let us have the poet's sonnet against railways :

‘ Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,  
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,  
Intrenched your brows ; ye gloried in each scar :  
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,  
That rules o’er Britain like a baneful star,  
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,  
And clear way made for her triumphal car  
Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold !  
Heard ye that Whistle ? As her long-linked Train  
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view ?  
Yes, ye were startled ;—and, in balance true,  
Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,  
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you  
To share the passion of a just disdain.’

Now for the indignant sonneteer's letter to the Quaker banker :

MY DEAR SIR,—You will be surprised with the matter which this letter will turn upon—viz., something like money business, and I feel that I ought not to approach you without previously resting my apology on your known friendly disposition. To come to the point at once, I have been led to consider Birmingham as the point from which the railway companies now forming receive their principal impulse, and I feel disposed to risk a sum—not more than 500l.—in purchasing Shares in some promising Company or Companies. I do not wish to involve you in the responsibility of *advising* an Investment of this kind, but I hope I do not presume too much when I request that you would have the kindness to point out to me what Companies are thought the most eligible, adding directions as to the mode of proceeding in case I determine upon purchasing. . . .

WM. WORDSWORTH

I have said that *Bernard Barton and His Friends* led to *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*. Everything in life is linked. There is no doubt that it was my connection with these books that caused Beeching, who was then editing Methuen's Little Library, to ask me to write the introduction to the *Essays of Elia* and later, in 1900, Methuen himself to commission a new edition of Lamb and a new biography.

Algernon Marshall Methuen Stedman, the head of Methuen's, who later changed his name to that of the firm, and in 1916 was made a Baronet, was a man of shrewdness and great determination. He had begun publishing when he was a schoolmaster, prompted by the success, in other hands, of the text books he had himself written. His own firm's first book, issued in 1889, was *Derrick Vaughan, Novelist*, by the lady who called herself 'Edna Lyall'; and old acquaintanceship with the Rev. S. Baring Gould, the Devonshire squire, parson and novelist, brought him his second book, *Old Country Life*. The most fortunate prize which he secured was Kipling's *Barrack-room Ballads*, in 1892: it was this work which gave the young house its real title to fame. Mr. Kipling, as poet, has remained with it ever since, his prose being published by Messrs. Macmillan. Later, Miss Marie Corelli's novels were a source of great profit and Sir

Algernon's own two selections of English poetry—*An Anthology of Modern Verse* and *From Shakespeare to Hardy*—had, and still have, wide popularity. Gradually I came to be of use to the firm as a Reader and continued this office until, on Sir Algernon's death in 1924, I was invited to serve as chairman, a post I hold still. Whether my fellow authors joined in singing—

‘Just for a handful of silver he left us’—

I cannot say ; but they need not have done so. I remained true.

The only excuse for a new edition of Lamb was that Canon Ainger had avoided spade-work. He was content to present what work by Lamb was known, without looking for more, and to annotate as little as possible rather than as fully. It went against the grain to come into the field in rivalry with him, whom I never met but was in touch with through our mutual friend, Beeching ; but I was too young and too fond of exploration to refuse. Whether I was too lavish in annotation is an open question, and no one would offend me by affirming that I was. But the new material I was able to bring to light should, I think, count for merit ; and I may say here that but for the help of the Shakespearean scholar, W. J. Craig, given with both hands, my notes could not have been what they are. When, all untimely, Craig came to die, I wrote a description of his funeral at Reigate which I should like to quote from here, as it contains a character-sketch of himself.

‘A short and sturdy Irish gentleman, with a large, genial grey head stored with odd lore and the best literature ; and the heart of a child. I never knew a man of so transparent a character. He showed you every thought : as someone once said, his brain was like a beehive under glass—you could watch all its workings. And the honey in it ! To walk with him at any season of the year was to be reminded or newly told of the best that the English poets have said on all the phenomena of wood and hedgerow, meadow and sky. He had the more lyrical passages of Shakespeare at



his tongue's end, and all Wordsworth and Keats. These were his favourites ; but he had read everything that has the true rapturous note, and had forgotten none of its spirit.

His life was divided between his books, his friends, and long walks. A solitary man, he worked at all hours without much method, and probably courted his fatal illness in this way. To his own name there is not much to show ; but such was his liberality that he was continually helping others, and the fruits of his erudition are widely scattered, and have gone to increase many a comparative stranger's reputation. His own *magnum opus*, a Shakespeare glossary, he left unfinished ; he had worked at it for years, until to his friends it had come to be something of a joke. But though still shapeless, it was a great feat, as the world, I hope, will one day know. If, however, this treasure does not reach the world, it will not be because its worth was insufficient, but because no one can be found to decipher the manuscript ; for I may say incidentally that our old friend wrote the worst hand in London, and it was not an uncommon experience of his correspondents to carry his missives from one pair of eyes to another, seeking a clue ; and I remember on one occasion two such inquirers meeting unexpectedly, and each simultaneously drawing a letter from his pocket and uttering the request that the other should put everything else on one side in order to solve the enigma.

Lack of method and a haphazard and unlimited generosity were not his only Irish qualities. He had a quick, chivalrous temper, too, and I remember the difficulty I once had in restraining him from leaping the counter of a small tobacconist's in Great Portland Street, to give the man a good dressing for an imagined rudeness—not to himself, but to me. And there is more than one 'bus conductor in London who has cause to remember this sturdy Quixotic passenger's championship of a poor woman to whom insufficient courtesy seemed to him to have been shown. Normally kindly and tolerant, his indignation on hearing of injustice was red hot. He burned at a story of meanness. It would haunt him all the evening. "Can it really be true ?" he would ask, and burst forth again into flame.

Abstemious himself in all things, save reading and writing and helping his friends and correspondents, he mixed

excellent whisky punch, as he called it. He brought to this office all the concentration which he lacked in his literary labours. It was a ritual with him ; nothing might be hurried or left undone, and the result, I may say, justified the means. . . .

His avidity as a reader—his desire to master his subject—led to some charming eccentricities, as when, for a daily journey between Earl's Court and Addison Road stations, he would carry a heavy hand-bag filled with books, "to read in the train". This was no satire on the railway system, but pure enthusiasm. He had indeed no satire in him ; he spoke his mind and it was over.

It was a curious little company that assembled to do honour to this old kindly bachelor—the two or three relatives that he possessed, and eight of his literary friends, most of them a good age, and for the most part men of intellect and in one or two cases of world-wide reputation, and all a little uncomfortable in unwonted formal black. We were very grave and thoughtful, but it was not exactly a sad funeral, for we knew that had he lived longer—he was sixty-three—he would certainly have been an invalid, which would have irked his active, restless mind and body almost unbearably ; and we knew, also, that he had died in his first real illness after a very happy life. Since we knew this, and also that he was a bachelor and almost alone, those of us who were not his kin were not melted and unstrung by that poignant sense of untimely loss and irreparable removal that makes some funerals so tragic ; but death, however it comes, is a mystery before which one cannot stand unmoved and unregretful ; and I, for one, as I stood there, remembered how easy it would have been oftener to have ascended to his eyrie and lured him out into Hertfordshire or his beloved Epping, or even have dragged him away to dinner and whisky punch ; and I found myself meditating, too, as the profoundly impressive service rolled on, how melancholy it was that all that storied brain, with its thousands of exquisite phrases and its perhaps unrivalled knowledge of Shakespearean philology, should have ceased to be. For such a cessation, at any rate, say what one will of immortality, is part of the sting of death, part of the victory of the grave, which St. Paul denied with such magnificent irony.

And then we filed out into the churchyard, which is a new and very large one, although the church is old, and at a snail's pace, led by the clergyman, we crept along, a little black company, for, I suppose, nearly a quarter of a mile, under the cold grey sky. As I said, many of us were old, and most of us were indoor men, and I was amused to see how close to the head some of us held our hats—the merest barleycorn of interval being maintained for reverence' sake ; whereas the sexton and the clergyman had slipped on those black velvet skull-caps which God, in His infinite mercy, either completely overlooks, or, seeing, smiles at. And there our old friend was committed to the earth, amid the contending shouts of football players in an adjoining field, and then we all clapped our hats on our heads with firmness (as he would have wished us to do long before), and returned to the town to drink tea in an ancient hostelry, and exchange memories, quaint and humorous and touching and beautiful, of the dead.'

After the appearance of that article in, I think, *The Country Gentleman*, I had the following letter from Norman Moore, afterwards President of the College of Physicians, who in his youth had been the friend of Charles Waterton the naturalist and later was Carlyle's medical attendant.

' Your account of Craig's funeral which I read to-day pleases me so much that I cannot but write to say how well you have written about him. For about thirty years, a week seldom passed, if he were in London, without his coming into my house, where we all delighted in his company and his talk and the shining goodness which radiated from him. The last piece of poetry he read aloud in my house was :

" What hell it is, in seeing long to bide  
To loose good dayes, that might be better spent,  
To wast long nights in pensive discontent,  
To speed today to be put back tomorrow ;  
To feed on hope to pine with feare and sorrow,"

and the rest of [the] lines on the subject. He was maintaining Spenser's greatness as a poet, as he often did. I always thought him very like Dr. Goldsmith, a man of

letters whom Mr. John Forster and even Mr. Elwin did not, I think, understand through and through, though Burke and Johnson did. Craig liked Mr. Elwin but I do not think Mr. Elwin, who generally understood men at once, quite saw into Craig, partly perhaps because the Irish turn of mind, of which Goldsmith and Craig were examples, is often misunderstood in England.

We miss Craig and always shall, and I feel a kindness for anyone who cared for him.'

Craig was not my only support when I was editing Lamb, although he was the one of whose kindness I took most advantage. William Archer was very helpful too, especially with theatrical history, and Stephen Gwynn, Craig's friend and fellow countryman, provided me with a number of translations from the Latin.

In order to see with my own eyes (which is the only way) as many Lamb manuscripts and books annotated by him, as possible, I had to go far afield; but not far enough, for very many were in America then and more are there now. The Rowfant examples, for instance, which I saw in their Tudor home in Sussex, are now in America. It was not till long after the edition was complete that I paid my first visit to that country. This is not the place for an enumeration of the Lamb treasures across the Atlantic, but I may say that the original of the Elia essay on Roast Pig is in Pierpont Morgan's collection in New York, and the original of 'Dream Children' in A. E. Newton's at Daylesford in Pennsylvania. With the manuscript in one's hand one can see that Lamb's first intention was to call this exquisite fantasy 'My Children'. I don't know what the principal attraction of the Pierpont Morgan library is to-day, but when I was there in 1920 the librarian told me that the majority of visitors asked first to be allowed to see the manuscript, with the author's illustrations, of *Trilby*.

During the task I had more than one call from an odd little persistent man who knew far more than I did but did not strike me as likely to be quiet in harness, who wished to be allowed to join forces: in his own phrase as '*amicus*

*curiae* ' ; but not for friendship alone. This was Carew Hazlitt. More to the point was the disinterestedness of Aldis Wright, who let me take away from Cambridge, for as long as I needed it, Edward FitzGerald's note-book of comments on Lamb. Bertram Dobell was full of kindness too.

Perhaps the most interesting experience to which this labour led was the evening I spent at ' The Pines ', to see Swinburne's copy of the works of George Wither, with Lamb's marginalia, and to hear his eulogies of Elia. Having written for permission to call, the reply came from Watts-Dunton, in the form of an invitation to dinner, and naturally I was only too happy to accept, the one bitter drop in the cup proceeding from the circumstance that I had never read *Aylwin*. Fortifying myself, however, with the forlorn hope that possibly no reference to that work would crop up, I ascended the steps of ' The Pines ', a gloomy genteel residence which, on the face of it, looked less likely than any suburban semi-detached villa to harbour genius.

I was shown into the room where dinner was immediately to be served, and had but time to note that it was hung with Rossettis when Watts-Dunton came in and greeted me. ' The Bard ', as he called Swinburne, would be down directly, he said ; and after a minute or so dishes were placed on the table, which was laid for three, and the poet made his entrance.

This, my first sight of Swinburne, I am not likely to forget, since various other preconceptions instantly crumbled away. For one thing, though he was as short as I had supposed, his body was by no means the inconsiderable affair that, from many testimonies, one had thought it. On the contrary, it was marked by solidity, and below the waistline was not less ethereal than that of many a trencherman who had never written at all or anything but prose. His face, too, which was highly coloured, bore further signs that materialistic interests were not outside his scheme of life. The eyes were fixed and mirthless. Above the eyes, however, all was different and magnificent—a dome, lofty and

aloof as one could ask, curiously like Shakespeare's. His hair, a ruddy grey, was thin ; his beard, the same colour, was fuller than I had expected. But his whole person was informed by prandial intentness. It had neither vivacity nor spiritual suggestion.

When I say that the poet made his entrance, I use the words carefully, for there was ceremonial about the action. He can be said to have moved both impressively and absurdly, in a posture so erect that it passed beyond the perpendicular and inclined a little backwards. What added the ultimate touch of unexpectedness was the fact that in his hand was a bottle of either beer or stout—I forget which. Grasping this firmly in front of him, the author of *Atalanta in Calydon* advanced to his chair, on the right of the head of the table, and sat down. Of me he took no notice whatever. Either he was wholly occupied in his own meditation, which his friend was not so maladroit as to interrupt in order to introduce me, or being so used to the apparition of unattractive strangers at the evening meal, and conscious of his own deafness and consequent difficulty as a conversationalist, he had arranged to be relieved from intercourse with them. I cannot say which. I only know that such detachment did not add to my comfort. And thus the meal began.

I do not pretend to have enjoyed it. Swinburne for a long time said nothing but applied himself stolidly to his food. From the careful way in which he poured the fluid from his cherished bottle, I gathered that that was his allowance and must be husbanded. Watts-Dunton spoke solely to me, chiefly of Borrow and himself, and the situation was not relieved by his question whether I recollected a certain passage in *Aylwin* which touched upon the very theory he happened to be then developing. To my dying day I shall count it for virtue, against how many deflections from the right path, that I had the courage to reply that I was still a stranger to that classic. The entrance of the sweets at this moment made a diversion so gracious that if I could meet that parlourmaid to-day I would go on my knees to her.

It was then that my host addressed his first remark to the poet, asking him whether he would have the pudding, whatever it was, or a jam tart?

The poet replied that he would have a jam tart.

'Ah! Swinburne,' said the critic, roguishly, in a deep theatrical voice, raised to penetrate the poet's deafness, 'I knew you would choose a jam tart.'

Another visitor to this convivial home assures me that Watts-Dunton always called the Bard 'Algernon'; but I feel certain of the collocation of 'Swinburne' with jam tart: my ears still retain the music.

The ice thus broken, Swinburne was informed in equally profound tones of my identity and mission, and reminded of my letter, and, the name of Lamb obviously touching one of his softest spots, for the first time looking in my direction he gave me a glance of welcome, thus kindling in me the only suggestion of warmth or of anything but constraint that I had yet felt.

It was then that, possibly feeling that my reception had not been of the most cordial and wishing to make me thoroughly at home at 'The Pines', Watts-Dunton proceeded to greater efforts.

'You remember, Swinburne,' he began, and here I may say that the conversation of these two intimates, who had lived together for so long and, one supposes, with so much understanding of each other, was oddly artificial to the stranger's ear. They spoke to each other not only like a book, and a very stilted one, but as if they had but just met. When absolutely alone they may have relaxed, but of that I know nothing. 'You remember, Swinburne,' Watts-Dunton resonated, 'that Canon Ainger once paid us a visit for a similar purpose.'

The poet remembered.

'And you remember, Swinburne,' his friend continued, 'that we thought him a very poor creature.'

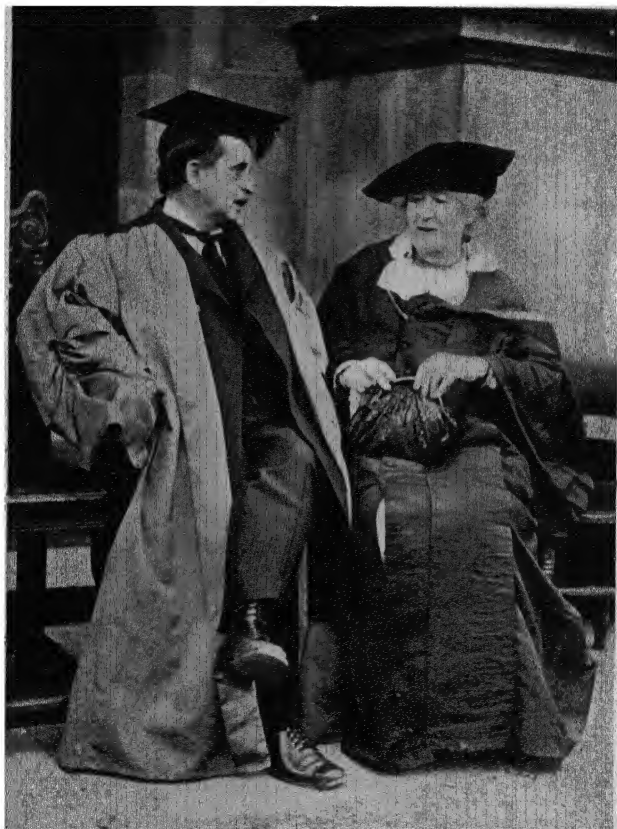
'Yes,' the poet echoed, 'a very poor creature.'

This manoeuvre having naturally put me completely at my ease, they turned to talk of Lamb, or rather of his friend,



*Back row, left:* Professor A. Blyth, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Arts; Sir Squire Bancroft, Lord Wester Wemyss, Sir Douglas Shields, John Galsworthy, General Sir Herbert Lawrence, E. V. Lucas, Dr. James Younger (Chancellor's Assessor), Colonel Freyburg, V.C., Dr. William Low (Rector's Assessor), W. S. Duke Elder (President University College, Dundee), Students' Representative Council, Charles Whibley, Sir James Guthrie, K.A., T. H. Osgood (Secretary, St. Andrews Students' Representative Council).  
*Front row, left to right:* Sir Geo. Adam Smith (Principal of Aberdeen), Dr. J. Yule Mackay (Principal, University College, Dundee), Very Rev. Primate Galloway (Principal of St. Mary's College), Sir James Irvine (Principal and Vice-Chancellor), Earl Haig (Chancellor), Sir J. M. Barrie, O.M. (Rector), Dame Ellen Terry, Sir Thos. Paxton (Lord Provost of Glasgow), D. E. Eason (President, St. Andrews Students' Representative Council).





SIR JAMES BARRIE, O.M., AND DAME ELLEN TERRY  
*At St. Andrews, 1922*

Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, who poisoned Miss Abercrombie because she had such thick ankles. Both now became animated. Concerning Wainewright the poet had a store of theories and some curious but not printable anecdotes which he had derived from another of Lamb's friends, Barry Cornwall. It was a mystery to him, he said, that Lamb with all his acuteness had been taken in by Wainewright—or 'Janus', as Lamb called him. The man must have had a very patent spuriousness. Still, every one has a blind spot; and so forth. The talk remained with Wainewright and other poisoners until the meal ended.

After dinner Swinburne left the room first, again carrying in his recessional march his bottle, in which a few precious drops still remained, and in a short while we followed him to a large room upstairs, full of books, where he had spread out his Lamb treasures all ready for me. Chief of these was the edition of Wither, with marginalia, and he was just beginning to be exceedingly interesting, talking with animation and enthusiasm and rotund eloquence, when Watts-Dunton, tapping my arm and remarking that it was 'time to leave the Bard, or he would not sleep', led me out of the room and downstairs. It seemed to me that Swinburne resented this interruption of a conversation which was clearly very near to his sympathies—for he knew Lamb's life and writings minutely—but I may have been mistaken. Anyway, my turn was over.

Downstairs I sat with my host for two or three hours, and listened to his reminiscences of the great and lesser journalists of his time. His anecdotage was very entertaining, but I had not gone to Putney for that. He told me, also, much about *Aylwin*, and showed me some sonnets in connection with that book which were soon to be given to the world. But my thoughts were with the Bard upstairs and those delectable volumes of which I had had but the briefest glimpse. Had Watts-Dunton, the 'greatest critic of poetry of his day', the man who had 'brought wonder back to life', possessed a larger measure of ordinary imagination he might have borrowed them for me for an hour; but no.

He had, I suspect, as a creative writer, 'come to his own', as we say, too recently.

That Swinburne did not wholly disapprove of me I gathered from the fact that when, not long after, his novel *Love's Cross Currents* was published, he sent me a copy with an autograph inscription, and, two or three days later, another.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONRAD

A restaurant encounter—*Almayer's Folly*—John Galsworthy—  
At Limpsfield—At Postgate—The Canterbury Week—*Lord Jim*—  
William Archer—A visit to the Temple—A. B. Walkley

IT was one evening in 1895 that in the Restaurant d'Italie in Old Compton Street Edward Garnett beckoned to me from another table, and when I joined him introduced the friend with him as Mr. Conrad, a ship's captain who had written a novel. The stranger was slight and foreign-looking, with manners so punctilious that they made one's own seem almost to be rudeness. On the table was a roll of galley proofs of his first book, *Almayer's Folly*, then going through the press for Fisher Unwin, and I was told how his life at sea had been ameliorated and diversified first by the study of English and then by the effort to write it and to write romance. In demeanour Conrad was very much the modest author, full of a charming self-depreciation (which he never lost, but which latterly was not always to be taken at its face-value and, indeed, could be almost a weapon), and responding with an embarrassing gratitude to wishes for his success. His eyes were brilliant. He spoke with a very strong foreign accent and in sentences not too well constructed, so that when I came to the pure English style of *Almayer's Folly* I was amazed. To the end his accent remained exotic, although his vocabulary of English words was richer, I suppose, than that of any English-born novelist now writing, and more sensitively managed.

As he developed, Conrad was less and less in need of advice, but at first it meant much to him, and had it not been for the accident which had prompted a young English-

man to take a voyage on the sailing-ship *Torrens*, where he made friends with the chief officer—the young Englishman being John Galsworthy and the chief officer Joseph Conrad—it is possible, indeed, that there might have been no *Almayer's Folly* and its successors at all. John Galsworthy did not stop there ; he passed the manuscript on to Garnett. I have a notion that Galsworthy (who remained Conrad's beloved ' Jack ' to the end) may not himself have yet begun to write, and that his talks with Conrad over de Maupassant perhaps stimulated his own ambition. Conrad, who was always so much pre-occupied with the workings of chance, must often have reflected with pleasure that they had been brought together by the agency of the sea.

When I came to know Conrad better—he had taken a cottage in the same country neighbourhood in order to be near the Garnetts : as a matter of fact it was the little house on Limpsfield Common which Stephen Crane had once occupied—I found him more confident, or at any rate less diffident. But I was never sure of him. Behind that eyeglass what was going on ? Was he indeed there at all or away in his study tearing his heart out over his new book ? For once having left his ancient element and taken to writing, Conrad was consumed by the fires of authorship. He lived for his work and suffered tortures in perfecting it. What language he thought in, I cannot say : I ought to have asked him but neglected to. Not impossibly French, although he was a Pole by birth and early education. But he wrote in the very un-French and un-Polish tongue of this island of ours and thus had additional obstacles to overcome. He had great charm, but he never quite convinced his companions that he would not be happier alone. Authors are like that ; the pen is a very jealous taskmaster.

I visited him less than I should have wished, for fear of cutting into his work, for he had none of the hack's regular hours ; and sometimes he came over to my cottage and took an incredible number of lumps of sugar in his tea and talked more of the English countryside than of books. He

delighted in domestic scenery. Melancholy seemed always to be brooding over him, but he had his fun too, and I remember his enjoyment of some absurd burlesque twists which I had given to his titles, the only one I recall being 'A Narcissus of a Nigger ; or, the Art of Darkiness'. Efforts to get him to express his real opinions of other writers were usually fruitless, although you could tell by his silences how the land lay. But on one occasion he went so far as to describe a certain publisher as a man of 'a horrible person-al-i-ty'. For the most part, however, he was smilingly inscrutable, and, no matter in what company, living behind his mask, and always so polite as almost to terrify.

His next home was in remote Kent, a damp and dark little farmhouse at Postling, where I saw him once only, having driven thither from Sandgate with H. G. Wells ; and then, except occasionally on his brief London visits, where we used to meet in Lady Colvin's drawing-room, I did not see him again until not long before he died and under very unexpected conditions, for it was in the Kent county cricket ground during the Canterbury week.

For the most part this ground is a mass-meeting of motor-cars, but on this afternoon the placidity of the game was suddenly broken into by the notes of a guard's horn, and in rolled a coach-and-four driven by a benign gentleman in gold spectacles and a white hat who might almost have come over from Dingley Dell. Behind him, on the next seat, was a distinguished bearded foreigner, amusedly surveying the scene through a single eyeglass. When I came to look again I saw that the driver was J. B. Pinker, the literary agent, since dead, and the distinguished bearded foreigner was Joseph Conrad. After the horses had been taken out and the vehicle was transformed into a private box, I joined the party, and for an hour or so sat with Conrad and did my best to qualify him to go in first for Poland. Cricket was strange to him, but he liked the crowd, and all our excitement about such trifles as bats and balls fed his sense of irony. Again the thought struck me that there can be no defence like elaborate courtesy.

I noticed that he had become much more restful ; prosperity was suiting him ; and, although grey, he was handsomer than ever, and his eyes as luminous. But for his gout, he said, he would be perfectly happy. He asked me to come back to his house near Ashford that evening, but I couldn't ; I said I would come directly I had a free week-end, but never found one, and thus another regret was added to the increasing heap.

With Conrad's death a very great writer passed away. He was an artist through and through, understanding all and hoping for very little ; alone, in his narrative method, in his use of words, and in his view of the universe. It was always on his mind that man should be so much the sport of destiny and the slave of emotion. If he had never been a sailor with a craving for adventure, his books would be the saddest things ; but the sea and the East brought in a misty atmosphere of loveliness and strangeness in which the futility and frustration of human effort were shrouded and now and then almost forgotten.

My own preferences among his writings are for the long novel, *Lord Jim*, and the short story, *Youth* ; but I recall with pleasure the exquisite flavour of the character-sketch called ' Karain ', in one of the early collections. What one feels about *Lord Jim*, surely the most patiently unfolded tragedy in the language, could be said only at some length, and this is not the place. *The Arrow of Gold* was the last of his books to hold me with absolute fascination, but I agree with a friend who said acutely of it that the woman herself is never so vital as Conrad's descriptions of her.

The last words from his hand that I read were in a letter of condolence to Sidney Colvin, then on the point of inevitable bereavement by the death of his wife. They were written three or four days before Conrad's own sudden death, a few hours after hers, and nothing could be more beautiful and more melancholy than this message, for his friendships were very real to him and this one had been intimate and complete.

I always suspected that he was a better novelist than a

sea captain. Otherwise he would probably never have left the sea, which he must have loved. Most men do what they ought to be doing or can do best. The only exception I can think of is William Archer, the dramatic critic, whom I knew very well, and who could do vastly better things than he was willing to do. It was to me a calamity that so fine an intellect should surrender so much to the stage: night after night seeing rubbishy things and passing judgment on them, many of them living hardly long enough to be still there when that judgment, very solemn, very precise, wholly conscientious, appeared in print. That Walkley, Archer's very close friend, should be at the theatre every night was fitting: that was Walkley's *métier* and he would have claimed no other; but Archer was also a thinker and a scholar; a linguist too, for it was not only because of his enthusiasm for Ibsen, but because of his translation of the dramas, that we had Ibsen in England when we did. All his life Archer had written plays, but without any success; and then just before he died he dreamed the plot of *The Green Goddess*, dramatized it with sufficient skill and made a lot of money. What he would have said of this play had he sat in the stalls and, contrary to his custom towards the end of his career, kept awake throughout, who shall say? But whatever he thought he would have set down in cold veracity.

It always seemed to me absurd that he should have written about the theatre at all, because what the newspaper wants is not a disquisition on the art of the drama, week after week, or day after day, but information as to how the critic was affected: whether amused or bored. This being so, it is important that the critic should be normal, should approximate to the readers themselves. Now, Walkley did approximate more than not. He ate a good dinner and went in a receptive mood, as the natural carnal man does. He would have been unhappy if the evening were otherwise spent. And then he stopped at the *Times* office on his way home and told us, not how wrong the play was, or how right, but why he liked or disliked it;



and many of us saw it, or stayed away, accordingly. Archer, on the other hand, far too intellectual for the rank and file, had a poor dinner, went to the theatre with the same mechanical preparedness with which he fulfilled every obligation, and then became frostily analytical. But he was the kindest of men and his advice and knowledge were always at the service of his friends.

Because of his Scotch way of approaching things seriously he was accused by those who did not know him of lacking humour ; but that is a mistake. He had plenty, although it was what a vintner would call dry rather than fruity. I remember, when I first met him, in the *Academy* office, he made a remark which I thought very funny and also very surprising ; at any rate not to be expected from my knowledge of his work. He said he was on his way to the Temple to see Goldsmith's grave and to lunch with another literary Irishman who had chambers there : George Moore. 'How much pleasanter', he added, 'to be lunching with Goldsmith and seeing George Moore's grave !'

To return to Walkley, I was wrong in saying that play-going was his only *métier*. He was a very keen taster of books too and wrote of them with great charm. There was no more companionable reviewer than 'A. B. W.' when he contributed 'Fly Leaves' to the *Star* in the distant eightennineties, while his literary causeries in the *Times*, much later, at the end of his career, moved on cee springs. He was too full of prejudices, and had too many blind spots, to be the perfect critic ; but within his limits he was a *petit maître*, to fall again into his own language.

## CHAPTER IX

### MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS

Poetry for children—Grant Richards—*The Flamp* and A. B. Walkley—*The Open Road*—The Gentlest Letter—William Hyde—Miss M. C. G. Jackson—Domestic essays—An examination paper in the writings of Charles Lamb—Early verses on London—John Horne—Nat Blaker—Old Sussex—Books on 'Travel'—'The Song of Solomon'—The Vexatious Curator

W. P. KER'S helpfulness in sending a lecture on poetry for children, which I had prepared for the University College Literary Society, to W. L. Courtney, who was then editing the *Fortnightly Review*, led incidentally to most of my literary activities. After keeping the article for several months, Courtney printed it, and Grant Richards, a nephew of Grant Allen, who was then commencing publishing, read it and asked me to make an anthology on the lines there laid down—my argument being that children should be led to true poetry by way of verse which is ingratiating even though uninspired, and thus should not run the risk of instantly hating the real thing. Andrew Lang in the *Saturday Review* was very sarcastic about this point of view, as the compiler of *The Blue Poetry Book*, where Wordsworth and Coleridge and Blake are to be found, might well be: but I think there was something in my scheme, and as the resulting volume, *A Book of Verses for Children*, is still, after thirty-four years, steadily selling, parents must share my view. The volume, published in 1897, was very charmingly illustrated by Francis Bedford, with coloured frontispiece and endpapers, and it had a novel feature in children's gift-books in the form of many pages of Notes. Having, in my excite-

ment, sold the copyright outright, I do not profit by its continued prosperity.

The publication of this book led to my joining Grant Richards in the capacity of Reader and miscellaneous author. One of the books that I found for him was Richard Whiteing's *No. 5 John Street*, and another that delicious piece of dry drollery, *The Wallet of Kai Lung*, but as this manuscript came from Quiller Couch with a letter strongly recommending it, I cannot claim credit either for discovery or for urging its publication. I am more proud of persuading my employer to bring out a cheap one-volume edition of that glorious Icelandic saga, *The Story of Burnt Njal*, as translated by Sir George Dasent.

It was Grant Richards who was willing to run the risk of publishing a little collection of original stories for children called *The Flamp*, to which A. B. Walkley was a very real friend. He said of it, in an article I have always treasured: 'For the way in which he'—that's me—'has written for and about children I owe him not merely gratitude but affection. The story of the Flamp I flatter myself I know by heart—for it goes to the heart. . . . I am proud to have introduced the Flamp to more children than one. In this way I am able to play the Fairy Godfather at a very moderate cost. And it will give one or two boys and girls something by which to remember me when they grow up.'

The publication of *The Flamp* led to a series of books for children of which I was the editor, the most successful of which was *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, which came to us from a stranger in India, a Mrs. Bannerman, and led to many imitations, always inferior, as imitations are. In the same series I gave a new lease of life to the *Cautionary Stories* of Mrs. Elizabeth Turner, a moralist of the last century whose want of humour is one of the most humorous things conceivable.

Some years later I was myself again to become an original author for children, in a volume of short stories called

*Anne's Terrible Good-Nature*, and a longer narrative about life in a caravan, called *The Slowcoach*.

The most successful book which I prepared while with Grant Richards in the eighteen-nineties was *The Open Road*, which, as its title and scope would hardly lead anyone to suppose, was compiled at a desk in the British Museum Reading Room.

To have made a large part of one's reputation by assembling and arranging other people's work is nothing to be proud of; and I am not proud; but I cannot resist the temptation to say that *The Open Road*, after thirty-two years, is still in steady request. It was by no means the first anthology—Palgrave's unsurpassable *Golden Treasury* had been a household volume since 1861—but it was one of the first to thread every pearl on one string, to bend every contribution to the editor's will, with the idea of making out of the old something new and vital. Such collections mean an enormous amount of reading—the discards outweigh the inclusions many times over—and, where the editor hopes for discoveries, as always I did, they mean the exploration even of periodicals; but I enjoyed it, and I remember that I particularly enjoyed the hunt for suitable material for a later and kindred volume called *Good Company: A Rally of Men*. Since I like that book the most, it is quite unnecessary to state that the public have liked it the least. I wonder if other literary men have had this experience: that their own darlings have always received the coolest welcome?

The anthology which involved the hardest work was, I think, *The Gentlest Art*, a collection of letters, with its companion, *The Second Post*. It would be impossible to compute the number of books which had to be read or looked through in order to skim this cream. I still have hundreds of rejections, all copied in the neat hand of the British Museum official who was then assisting me. *The Gentlest Art* led to an amusing postscript. A firm of drapers in a seaside resort sent me, two or three years after publication, a specimen of epistolary gentleness of the highest

order. My book had attempted to be representative, and examples of most kinds of letters were given ; but, strangely enough, the trait of pure gentleness itself was not illustrated. That omission was now supplied by a missive so gentle—more than gentle, so shrinkingly mild, so utterly apologetic, so exquisitely considerate—as probably to constitute a record.

‘ GENTLEMEN,—Will you, of your kindness, pardon the liberty I take in venturing to trouble you with a small request, being a stranger to you. But my sister, Mrs. Avenell, lately residing at Bellevue, Medina Road, Brighton, intimated to me that you would very likely be so good as not to object to my requesting a small favour from you, and I have ventured to ask in that belief. If, therefore, I am not presuming too much, might I ask the kind favour of a black velvet-spotted veil being sent to me ? The pattern I venture to enclose is from a veil my sister sent me from your establishment, and it is so superior to those I obtain here, in softness and thickness of the spots, that I should much like another, as near to it as convenient. I think the one yard and a little more came to about one and sixpence. It is the soft quality which I like, combined with the close thick spots.

I will, if you are so good as to entertain my request, send postal order previously to the receipt of the parcel.

Awaiting your kind reply, with many apologies if I have troubled you inconveniently.

Believe me to be,

Gentlemen,

Yours respectfully,

(MRS.) EMILY POWELL ’

This is the gentlest artist, is it not ? How one would like to see a complete collection of her correspondence : her letters to the butcher, for example. One imagines her solicitude for the creatures she is doomed to eat :

‘ If it should so happen that owing to the unfortunate accident of human carnivorousness you have, dear sir, the body of a sheep on hand, would it be too much to ask of

your great courtesy that you directed four cutlets to be sent to the rectory for to-morrow's dinner ? '

And then the letters of remonstrance, what must they be like ?

' Mrs. Powell regrets exceedingly to have to find fault, but the fish which she asked Mr. Brown to be so very kind as to send in time for the evening's dinner has not yet arrived, although it is now midnight. Mrs. Powell does not like to ask her maids to sit up any longer to receive it, should it still come, and therefore Mr. Powell is taking this letter to the post. Mrs. Powell hopes that no such error will ever occur again, but she is confident that it is due to no carelessness on the part either of Mr. Brown or of his assistants, but to some quite unavoidable accident, perhaps occurring in the sea itself. Nevertheless, she thought she might venture just to remark upon the disappointment of herself and her guests.'

But nothing that one can invent can approach the charm and dove-like lowliness—in short, the gentleness—of the original. That, like all originals, is better than any imitation can be.

The first edition of *The Open Road* had decorative endpapers drawn for it by a strange man of genius named William Hyde, a shy artist who was, I think, one of the many gifted persons first brought to light by Edward Garnett, and the illustrator of Garnett's own book of ecstatic moods of nature-worship, *An Imaged World*. Hyde was an unhappy man with a large family, small means and a tyrannical conscience. His medium being pen and ink or wash, his work made no appeal to the ordinary picture-buyer, who wants colour, nor were the aspects of Nature which normally attracted him those which most people prefer. To me there is something about Hyde's evening and night effects hardly less moving than the actual scenes ; the hush, the mystery, the suspense are marvellously suggested. One of his illustrations to Meredith's ' Love in the Valley ' remains vividly in my mind,

though it is many years since I saw it. But Hyde was not fitted for a world of mercenary editors, dealers and shop-keepers; he became embittered, a man with a grievance, living in country places of increasing inaccessibility, and I lost sight of him. I fear that his end was far from happy.

He told me once a curious story of his early London days when he lodged in Westminster. On the first night of his tenancy, on arriving home very late he found on the doorstep, in an unconscious condition, the body of a man. Thinking it might be some one who lived there and had been overtaken, he rang for the landlady. Not in the least surprised, she merely asked her new lodger to help her to get the 'poor gentleman' in. 'You see,' she said, 'it's Dr. Jekyll.'

'Dr. Jekyll?' said Mr. Hyde.

'Yes, the organist.'

When St. Loe Strachey took over the editorship of the *Cornhill* after the death of James Payn he asked me to write an article around an old facetious book called *The Miseries of Human Life*, of which he had long had a copy; and this led to further contributions consisting of essays on everyday subjects. These, when collected into a little volume called *Domesticities*, brought me stimulating letters from strangers near and far. One of the pleasantest features of authorship is the kindly eagerness of certain readers to say thank you. In the case of *Domesticities* my correspondents usually said that I had put into words what they themselves had so often thought; a form of praise which, though it might irritate a poet or a genius by bringing him down to a common level, should not discourage a familiar essayist. One of the results of my 'Literary Gossip' column in the *Globe* had been to bring me into a correspondence with a lady living in Carshalton, a Miss Minnie Jackson, which lasted till her death several years later. A very shy recluse, she would have shrunk from any publicity being given to her remarkable qualities of sympathy and understanding, and to her personal generosities, but it is a

pleasure to me to write her name in this book and again to express my gratitude for the index to my Life of Lamb which she lovingly compiled. I suppose that many writers of regular causeries make such friends through their work—I hope so—but none could be more kind or stimulating than was Miss Jackson to me, and when this first book of essays, *Domesticities*, was finished, I was glad to be able to dedicate it to her in the following lines :

‘ In gratitude ; yet with apology  
For offering a book which seems to me  
So very far from what it ought to be.

Because all books, I think, should manifest  
Their author’s self, complete, north, south, east, west ;  
And here so much of me seems unexpressed :

Not great (Heaven knows !) nor curiously fine,  
Nor aught, maybe, to help a single line,  
Yet certain things more intimately mine.

Still, lacking these, I beg to give it you—  
One of the kindest friends man ever knew.  
Perchance, in reading, you’ll deduce a few.’

When *Domesticities* went out of print, what I thought best in it was incorporated in a new collection of essays called *Fireside and Sunshine*, 1906, which is still alive, if not exactly kicking.

My last contribution to the *Cornhill*, long after Strachey had left it to devote all his time to the *Spectator*, was in 1910 : an examination paper on the works of Lamb, as the first of a series in which Andrew Lang performed the same service for Scott, Owen Seaman for Browning, and Quiller Couch for R.L.S.

Here are my questions, answers to which will be found at the end of the book :

1. What were the first words the Lambs used when they were at last in their seats in the gallery of a theatre ?



## 158 READING, WRITING AND REMEMBERING

2. (a) What was the effect on Charles Lamb of butter ill-melted? and (b) What innocent cates did he relish less as he grew less innocent?
3. How did Wharry express his rage when anything offended him?
4. What is the outward desideratum of a volume?
5. What was the procedure of 'Monoculus' to induce a squeamish patient to swallow his medicine?
6. What is a profanation of all the purposes of the cheerful Playhouse?
7. How many of whom started up to explain to Lamb that a certain great poet could not be present at a convivial party? Who was the poet? And why could he not be present?
8. Whose mind was in its original state of white paper?
9. Who was wayward, spiteful K., and what did he borrow from Lamb?
10. (a) When Lamb's aunt once pressed civility out of season, what was the retort she brought upon herself? (b) Why did Lamb think of the speaker of this retort as prodigiously rich?
11. Of whose countenance could no one say 'It would have been better if she had but a——' what?
12. What reason have we for feeling certain that Lamb had no part of his education at a Jesuit seminary?

The series of books of anecdotal topography, of which I have written several, began with an invitation from Macmillans to write on Sussex in their 'Highways and Byways' Series. This I was very willing to do, since I had known the county from earliest years and had a store of material to call upon; but I never look at the book now, or indeed at any of my 'Wanderers', without wishing at once to sit down and re-write it.

Two things in my Sussex book gave me particular pleasure: one to find and the other to write. The discovery was the Song of Solomon in the Sussex vernacular as arranged by the Sussex antiquary, Mark Antony Lower, for Prince Lucien Buonaparte, who was a great student of dialect. It runs thus, and could anything be prettier?

·1. Lookee, you be purty, my love, lookee, you be purty. You've got dove's eyes adin yer locks; yer hair is lik a flock of goats dat appear from Mount Gilead.

2. Yer teeth be lik a flock of ship just shared, dat come up from de ship-wash; every one of em bears tweens, an nare a one among em is barren.

3. Yer lips be lik a thread of scarlet, an yer speech is comely; yer temples be lik a bit of a pomgranate adin yer locks.

4. Yer nick is lik de tower of Daöved, built for an armoury, what dey heng a thousan bucklers on, all shields of mighty men.

5. Yer two brestès be lik two young roes, what be tweens, dat feed among de lillies.

6. Till de dee break, an der shedders goo away, I'll git me to de mountain of myrrh, and to de hill of frankincense.

7. You be hem purty, my love; der aünt a spot in ye.

8. Come along wud me from Lebanon, my spouse, wud me from Lebanon: look from de top of Amana, from de top of Shenir and Hermon, from de lions' dens, from de mountain of de leopards.

9. Ye've stole away my heart, my sister, my spouse. Ye've stole away my heart wud one of yer eyes, wud one chain of yer nick.

10. How fair is yer love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is yer love dan wine! an de smell of yer intments dan all spices.

11. Yer lips, O my spouse, drap lik de honeycomb; dere's honey an melk under yer tongue; an de smell of yer garments is lik de smell of Lebanon.

12. A fenced garn is my sister, my spouse, a spring shet up, a fountain sealed.

13. Yer plants be an archard of pomegranates wud pleasant fruits, camphire an spikenard.

14. Spikenard an saffron, calamus an cinnamon, wud all trees of frankincense, myrrh, an allers, wud all de best of spices.

15. A fountain of garns, a well of livin waters, an straims from Lebanon.

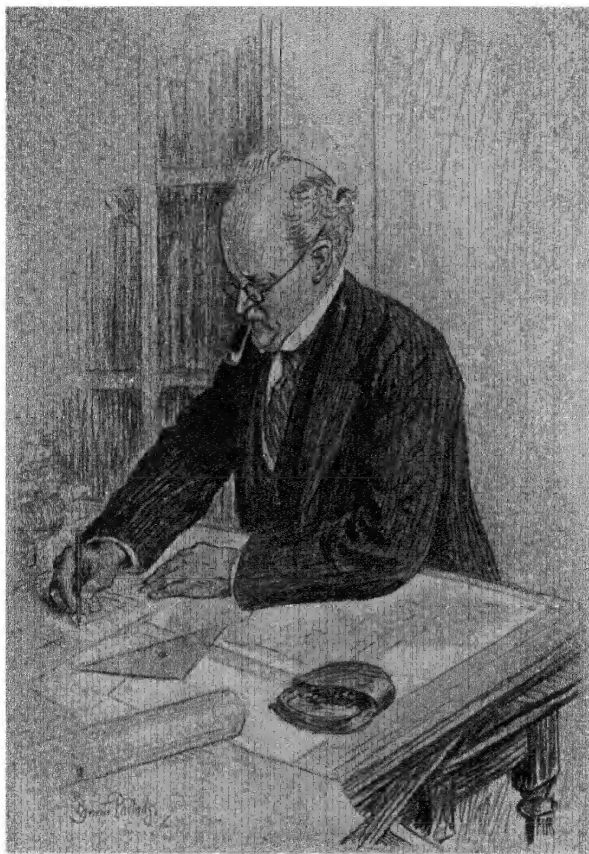
16. Wake, O north win, an come, ye south; blow upon

my garn, dat de spices of it may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garn, an ait his pleasant fruits.

The other is the character sketch, which I wrote for the second edition, of a relation of mine, conversations with whom were among the most treasured experiences of my Brighton days.

'The best knower of Sussex of recent times has died since this book was printed: one who knew her footpaths and spinneys, her hills and farms, as a scholar knows his library. John Horne of Brighton was his name: a tall, powerful man even in his old age—he was above eighty at his death—with a wise, shrewd head stored with old Sussex memories: hunting triumphs; the savour of long, solitary shooting days accompanied by a muzzle-loader and single dog—such days as Knox the ornithologist describes; historic cricket matches; stories of the Sussex oddities, the long-headed country lawyers, the Quaker autocrats, the wild farmers, the eccentric squires; characters of favourite horses and dogs (such was the mobility of his countenance and his instinct for drama that he could bring before you visibly any animal he described); early railway days (he had ridden in the first train that ran between Brighton and Southwick); fierce struggles over rights-of-way; reminiscences of old Brighton before a hundredth part of its present streets were made; and all the other body of curious lore for which one must go to those whose minds dwell much in the past. Coming of Quaker stock, as he did, his memory was good and well-ordered, and his observation quick and sound. What he saw he saw, and he had the unusual gift of vivid precise narrative and a choice of words that a literary man should envy.

A favourite topic of conversation between us was the best foot route between two given points—such as Steyning and Worthing, for example, or Lewes and Shoreham. Seated in his little room, with its half a dozen sporting prints on the wall and a scene or two of old Brighton, he would, with infinite detail, removing all possibility of mistake, describe the itinerary, weighing the merits of alternative paths with profound solemnity, and proving the wisdom of every departure from the more obvious track.



SIR EDWIN LUTYENS, R.A.

*From the drawing by Sir Bernard Partridge in Punch, July 20, 1927*



CHARLES DICKENS AND LITTLE NELL  
*From the Statuary Group by Edwin Elwell at Philadelphia*

Were Sussex obliterated by a tidal wave, and were a new county to be constructed on the old lines, John Horne could have done it.

Of his talk I found it impossible to tire, and I shall never cease to regret that circumstances latterly made visits to him very infrequent. Towards the end his faculties now and then were a little dimmed; but the occlusion carried compensation with it. To sit with an old man and, being mistaken by him for one's own grandfather, to be addressed as though half a century had rolled away, is an experience that I would not miss.

To the end John Horne dressed as the country gentlemen of his young days had dressed; he might have stepped out of one of Alken's pictures, for he possessed also the well-nourished complexion, the full forehead, and the slight fringe of whiskers which distinguished Alken's merry sportsmen. His business taking him deep into the county among the farms, he was always in walking trim, with an umbrella crooked over one arm, his other hand grasping the obtuse-angled handle of a ground-ash stick. These sticks, of which he had scores, he cut himself, his eye never losing its vigilance as he passed through a copse. Under the handle, about an inch from the end, he screwed a steel peg, so that the stick, when it was not required, might hang upon his arm; while a long, stout pin, with a flat brass head, was also inserted, in case his pipe needed cleaning out. Thus furnished, with umbrella and stick, pipe and a sample of his merchandise, John Horne, in his wide collar, his ample coat with vast pockets over the hips, his tight trousers, and his early-Victorian headgear, has been, these fifty years, a familiar figure in the Weald as he passed from farm to farm at a steady gait, his interested glances falling this way and that, noting every change (and perhaps a little resenting it, for he was of the old Tory school), and his genial salutation ready for all acquaintances. But he is now no more, and Sussex is the poorer, and the historian of Sussex poorer still. I believe he would have liked this book; but how he would have shaken his wise head over its omissions!

A contemporary of John Horne was the Brighton doctor Nathaniel Blaker, who lived to a great age and died in

retirement at Hurstpierpoint in 1921. He was a notable figure in his time, as he went his rounds in his phaeton : a thin, spare man, clean shaven with an odd crooked face and piercing eyes with a sideways look. His *Reminiscences*, privately printed in 1906, were full of sound observation and kindly sagacity and offered many valuable glimpses of an irrecoverable past. His special part of the county was the district just under the Downs between Poynings and Beeding, in the villages of Edburton and Fulking—a part that I happen to know rather well. His memories extended to those remote times when, though smuggling itself might perhaps be over, famous smugglers of the past could still be pointed out as they sat demurely in their pews on Sunday ; to those times when part of the mural decoration of every cottage was a birch rod over the mantel-piece ; and he constantly saw the feat known as ‘ turning the cup ’ performed or bungled at a harvest home. He told us that the men on his father’s farm at Perching were ‘ blooded ’ twice a year, in the spring and autumn, walking in parties, usually on Sunday morning, to the nearest doctor or veterinary surgeon, and losing from eight to ten ounces of blood for a shilling fee. He remembered also a nonagenarian sportsman with singularly antiquated notions of maintaining a sound mind in a sound body, for he accounted for his good health and longevity by saying, ‘ I was always very careful. I never drank much wine ; five or six glasses at dinner and the same after dinner. But I used to drink punch from six o’clock at night to six o’clock next morning.’

It is around Edburton that Dr. Blaker’s fondest recollections clustered. Here is a pretty touch of colour : ‘ The women had a habit of wearing long scarlet cloaks which, when wandering in the lanes or on the hillside, gave them a peculiarly pleasing and picturesque appearance. Those cloaks formed part of the stores sold after the war which ended with Waterloo.’ Our own post-bellum sales yielded little bright material. Touching on the ancient Church services, he wrote that ‘ there was great emulation

between the different neighbouring choirs. The choir of Ditchling was thought to be good, and they used to come to Edburton on one Sunday in the year to join the choir there in church, and on another Sunday the Edburton choir paid a return visit to Ditchling. Of course, on these Sundays there was no singing at all in the church the choir had left, for the music, a bass-viol, flute, and so forth, had gone too. This happened also occasionally at other times if the leaders did not appear in their places.' It was such *con-tretemps* that led to harmoniums and schoolchildren's voices.

The rectors of Edburton in Mr. Blaker's day were good fellows; chief among them Mr. Tufnell, who introduced the post into the village and had the charming idea of amusing the children by climbing to the top of Edburton hill, followed by all his younger flock, and then rolling a Dutch cheese down the escarpment, with the whole pack in pursuit of it. It was Mr. Tufnell who, having an order to go over the *Victory*, which had just come into Portsmouth Harbour, rode thither, and was received by Captain Hardy ('Kiss-me Hardy') in person, with these direct sailor-like words: 'I am sorry I am too busy to attend to you myself, but my wife will be delighted to do so, she's so d——d fond of parsons.' He was, however, shown everything, including the cask in which Nelson's body was preserved, and the damage done by the shot to the ship and sails.

But the best character in the book is Mr. Marchant, who was known as 'Uncle Tom Marchant' by the whole countryside, and whose distinction it was to cut a new set of teeth after the age of seventy. The description of Mr. Marchant's funeral would not strike a reader as anachronistic if he chanced upon it in an old *Spectator*. Having 'no opinion of parsons', he often said that when he died he hoped he should have a 'view halloo' over his grave. 'I was at his funeral', says Mr. Blaker, 'some years after at Edburton church, which is situated some two or three hundred yards from the foot of the Downs. During the service a hare, hard pressed by the Brighton hounds, came over the front of the hills and squatted about half-way down the hill, and



perhaps a quarter of a mile to the east of the church. As the coffin was being lowered into the grave the huntsman and hounds appeared over the top of the hill ; he gave the view halloo, and the hounds ran the hare in view to about a quarter of a mile to the west of the church, where she was killed exactly as the service ended. So the old man had his wish.'

Although my own favourite among my ' Wanderer ' books is that on Florence, the most popular has always been the first London volume. Looking through old papers for the purpose of the present task, I find that when I was nineteen I was already occupied with the idea of London, even to the extent of writing a whole manuscript book about it—of course, in verse—although I had then been there only on the briefest visits. Still, lack of experience has seldom been a deterrent to authorship. My book was called *London : Idylls of the Street*, 1888, consisting of twenty-four sets of verse, with dedication (to my elder brother), introduction and notes, all copied out very tidily in my own hand, which was more legible then than it now is. I hope I shall be believed when I say that I had completely forgotten the existence of this early masterpiece. The best thing in it is a memorial to de Quincey's Ann. But my only quotation is taken from a eulogy of the circus ; a eulogy to which, except for a month at Christmas, London is no longer, I regret to say, entitled.

' I love a circus—sawdust, ring, and band and grooms, and tent,

I love the rush and bustle that precede the next event,  
The vast importance of the man who leads the lady in,  
The nonchalance the lady shows while waiting to begin,  
The grandeur of the autocrat who rules with cracking whip,  
The negro butt of every clown—the slave of slap and trip,  
The juggler throwing gilded balls and catching them  
with ease,

The acrobat who cleaves the air and swings from a trapeze.  
I love a circus ! And I love its old traditions well,  
But most of all I love its musty, tanyard, sawdust smell.'

. It is never time to put *Finis* to any book : something new always comes to mind immediately the last proof has been passed for press ; but this melancholy truth applies peculiarly to guide-books, which, if one has a conscience, lead one into far more expense in revising than any publisher can afford to pay. I am glad to have written so much about foreign cities, but I should be better off had I never begun to do so. Our principal enemies are, I think, the curators of picture galleries, who are continually rehangings. But imperious and impulsive innovators like the Duce, who sweep away landmarks with a gesture, can be the foes of Baedeker and of his followers too. Not that I can pretend to any of the beneficent Karl's thoroughness : my object has been merely to say what I personally liked best and 'to create a *goût*' ; but even then the visits to the Continent had to be frequent if I was not to be a will-o'-the-wisp to lead my readers astray. The capricious changes of Paris, for instance, are unceasing. Very recently, to give but one example, that beautiful spacious road running between lawns and palaces from the Arc de Triomphe to the Bois and known to the world as the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne was renamed the Avenue Foch. Very right that the illustrious Maréchal should be memorialized, although possibly there might have been a better way ; but in any case a landmark was lost and its loss must be noted. When, in 1905, I began the 'Wanderer' Series, with a book on Holland, I proposed to be far more impressionistic in manner : the desire to impart useful information came later. I wish it had not.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ACADEMY

Lewis Hind—Capricious patrons—'Pegasus at Tattersall's'—Lionel Johnson—H. C. Beeching—A visit to W. E. Henley—Francis Thompson—'What's Dunton?'—The desecrating purser—First realization of painting—Charles Whibley—George Moore—Bernard Shaw—Stephen Leacock at Hambledon—Alice Meynell—Stephen Phillips—Maurice Hewlett

WHEN in 1896 a wealthy American business man resident in London, John Morgan Richards, the father of the brilliant satirical novelist who called herself John Oliver Hobbes, bought the weekly literary review the *Academy*, the new editor, Lewis Hind, asked me to join himself and Wilfred Whitten in the production of the paper. The original *Academy*, with its signed articles, had been a battle-ground for scholars; the new one was conducted on more popular lines. Scholarship, if it made its appearance there, was strictly an importation; for Hind was essentially an impressionist. He was a man of sweet nature, with a curious sidelong humorous way of looking at himself; but as an editor he was too susceptible to the opinions of others, and his own writing was, I always thought, impaired by sentimentality. He was able, however, to attract to the paper some first-class minds, notably two Catholic mystics and masters of prose, Lionel Johnson and Francis Thompson, both of whom wrote for practically every number; Arnold Bennett, then editing a weekly paper called *Woman*, who wanted an outlet for his views on books; P. Anderson Graham, afterwards editor of *Country Life*, who contributed a series in which established reputations were reconsidered; and Alice and Wilfred Meynell, who kept a benevolent eye on our activities generally.

. The *Academy* did not run very long. Millionaires may start out by saying that they don't expect to make money from this kind of hobby, any more than from a yacht, and, more, that they don't mind what they lose ; but there is always a breaking-point. I forget what the life of the *Academy* under Lewis Hind was—far longer than my participation in it—but I remember that in its heyday several books were 'crowned', among them Maurice Hewlett's *Pan and the Young Shepherd*, Stephen Phillips' *Christ in Hades*, and Conrad's short story *Youth*, and that I left it to become a publisher's Reader and to concentrate on literary work of my own.

In addition to assisting in the office, I wrote a great many paragraphs and reviews and now and then a squib. Once again, I reproduce something bearing upon the poets of the day, who seem to have been much upon my mind.

#### PEGASUS AT TATTERSALL'S

'The Laureate [Alfred Austin] was absent. He had, it appears, entertained a wish to buy the horse by private treaty, and with that purpose met Mr. Tattersall in a confidential interview. But what happened then had permanently damped his ardour. The character of Pegasus, it seemed, was too unsound. Mr. Austin required a cob invariably quiet to ride or drive, and Pegasus, it could not be denied, has now and again kicked over the traces.

However, the illustrious official passed from Mr. Tattersall's office to the stable to view the animal. "Lor!" said one of the grooms afterwards, "you'd think as what he'd never seen a horse before." "Is that Peg?" he asks. "In course it is," says the governor. "Amazing," says the gent; "why, I'd no idea he was like that. This clearly ain't the mount for me," he says, and off he goes.

From the same groom came information concerning the visit paid to Pegasus in his stall by Mr. Swinburne. "Yes," said he, "there was another gent; a thin one with a red beard. He seemed to have knowed the horse before; spoke about the rides he'd once had on him, and such like, though why his riding days should be over I can't see. But he

spoke as if they were. And the 'orse seemed pleased to see him too ; whinnied when he stroked him, and behaved pretty-like."

Pegasus was also said to have taken a piece of sugar from Mr. Austin Dobson's hand.

The animal was led into the hall by Mr. William Archer, who, though he seemed familiar with its character, was not wholly at his ease ; and, after narrowly escaping an unexpected frolic with its heels, relinquished the halter to a groom with apparent relief.

Mr. Tattersall opened proceedings by stating, to the dismay of some of the company, that a reserve (which he did not specify) was placed upon Pegasus. He then called upon Mr. Edmund Gosse to dilate upon the extraordinary virtues of the animal. Mr. Gosse complied with his customary readiness. Climbing to the rostrum, he pulled from his pocket a paper which contained, he said, a few quatrains written for the occasion, in the manner of FitzGerald's translation of Omar Khayyam, and these, he added, he proposed to read. Doubtless he would have done so if a voice, which some persons present affected to recognize as that of Mr. Churton Collins, had not called out, "Cut the cackle, and come to the 'osses."

Mr. Gosse's place was taken by Mr. Watts-Dunton, who, profiting by Mr. Gosse's discomfiture, wisely made no mention of the sonnet sequence which was in his inside pocket, but plunged at once into a disquisition on the nature of the animal, which was only brought to a conclusion by a cry : "Here, that'll do : this is an auction room ; this ain't a blooming Athenaeum. Besides," added the speaker, as an afterthought, "the 'orse is listening."

The sale then began.

The first bid was five shillings, from a gentleman who announced himself to be the editor of the *Thrush*, and who, on finding that the horse was not at once knocked down to him, left the building. "The thrush ?" said Mr. Yeats, "phwhat's that ? I thought it was a throat disease." "So it is," said Mr. Herbert Paul.

Mr. John Lane then offered a pound. He seemed surprised when the sum was immediately doubled by another speculator ; and he did not bid any more.

Mr. Robert Bridges at this point stopped the sale for a moment to ask a few questions. "Can it", he wished to know, "perform the feats of the *Haute Ecole*?" Mr. Tattersall had no information. "I mean," Mr. Bridges continued, "can it step to music, waltz, polka, change feet, or kneel, at the word of command." Mr. Tattersall said he hoped not. "Then", replied Mr. Bridges, "this is clearly no place for me" and he left the hall. With him went Mr. Binyon.

Among those who were present, but did not bid, was the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. "I just dropped in", he explained, "to look at his Occ's."

Mr. Stephen Phillips also did not bid. He said he had lost his heart to a cab-horse which took him to His Majesty's Theatre one day last year, and he wanted none other. "Besides," he added, "if I ever did buy a hack I am pledged to one with five feet which I saw at the World's Fair—a wonderful creature."

Mr. Rudyard Kipling was not present, but Mr. A. P. Watt was, and bid in his name. The fact that he was bidding also for other clients did not seem in the least to embarrass him. After a certain figure had been reached Mr. Watt shut up his note-book and left. "Ah weel," he said, "Pegasus or no Pegasus, ma clients will pay their way. And all things conseedered, it doesna displease me that Mr. Kipling should be kept from poetry."

The reserve was never reached, the highest bid being made by the representative of the *Daily Mail*, who, profiting by the advanced John Bullism of the moment, proposed to boil the animal down into a brand of patriotic beef-tea.'

I wrote also some articles on 'Forgotten Books', one of which, as I have said earlier, led to the re-issue of Dr. Garnett's *Twilight of the Gods*. Another dealt with *The Island* by Richard Whiteing, my first host in London; and a third with a very charming fanciful story of medieval England called *Dagonet the Jester*, by the ill-fated Malcolm Macmillan, who disappeared when travelling in Greece and was never heard of again.

Recalling our two most constant reviewers, I see first of all Lionel Johnson and Francis Thompson. Johnson was

physically an eremite but intellectually gregarious ; he lived alone on a top floor in Gray's Inn, with photographs of his friends about him, while, when he published a book containing seventy poems, it contained also seventy dedications. His was a small spiritual figure, with a boyish face lined with care. A poet in the lapidary style, a writer of sensitive musical prose, he always seemed to me out of place in London. He should have lived at Oxford.

Where his co-religionist and colleague, Francis Thompson, dwelt, I never knew ; certainly not in fastidiously furnished rooms in Gray's Inn. Lionel Johnson had his competency ; Francis Thompson lived from hand to mouth. This, by the way, was the time when all the new poets' names ended with 'son'—Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson, John Davidson, William Watson, leading that witty cleric, H. C. Beeching, to a poem on the subject with a couplet referring to the slopes of Parnassus, the slopes

' whereon in gladness romp  
The sons of David, Wat and Thomp '.

Whether the son of Thomp received his *Academy* payments direct or whether they were sent to his friend and counsellor, Wilfred Meynell, to be dispensed to him, I am not sure ; but the second way would have been better, for Thompson was ill fitted to manage his own affairs.

There is a curious inconsistency or unexpectedness in many men, and in Thompson's case it was his passion for cricket. That this rapt solitary creature, not in the least belonging to our world, unconscious of anything but his own thoughts, unheeding of what he ate or was wearing, should be a poet, a critic and a scholar, one would have little difficulty in believing ; but that he was capable of following an innings at Lord's with intelligence seemed ludicrously unlikely. Yet he is the only writer who has brought the true poetic note into cricket verse.

One afternoon Hind took Thompson, Whitten and myself to call on Henley at Muswell Hill. Henley was, of course, one of the great talkers of his time, as Stevenson has made

clear in his essay on that theme, where Henley is called Burly ; and on that afternoon, he talked vigorously, aggressively, fearlessly. His lameness had driven all his force upwards, into his great combative head. He held strong views on every subject that could be raised, except perhaps mathematics, and he expressed them instantaneously and with a wealth of expletive. But his exercises in scornful contempt, although clearly a relishing occupation, did not give him more pleasure than roundly to praise. He was for or against with equal gusto.

When I first met Theodore Watts, at Richard Whiteing's, he was still Watts unadorned ; but when I met Henley Watts had just annexed the name of Dunton. Henley was immensely tickled by this new style. ' I always used to say the fellow was no poet,' he said, ' but I must eat those words now. He's a poet all right. Only a poet could add Dunton to his name. Watts-Dunton ! What's Dunton ? Yes, indeed, who can answer that question ? ' And so on.

Henley gave me—having bidden his devoted Anna to fetch it—a leaflet containing his sonnet on the death of a friend's child, one of his most beautiful later poems. His first collection, *A Book of Verses*, with the etching of the Old Infirmary at Edinburgh where for so long he lay ill, on the title page, I had long treasured, and I used to know much of it by heart.

' On the way to Kew,  
By the river old and gray,  
Where in the Long Ago  
We laughed and loitered so,  
I met a ghost to-day,  
A ghost that told of you—  
A ghost of low replies  
And sweet, inscrutable eyes  
Coming up from Richmond  
As you used to do.

—Is not that charming ? ' Out of the strong came forth sweetness,' I thought when I had my first sight of the poet and remembered these lines. But I had another reason to



cherish *A Book of Verses*, which was that the surgeon described in one of the sonnets in the section called 'In Hospital' is the great Lister, and, as I have said in the Preface to this book, the great Lister and I have ancestors in common. But for Lister's skill and Henley's belief in him the world would have lost a true poet, a fine critic and the most adventurous and uncompromising editor of recent times.

Henley's most famous lyric is, and I suppose will always be, his defiant expression of independence beginning—

' Out of the night that covers me '

It is no fault of an author—rather is it a virtue—when his poems become hackneyed ; but it is unfair to Henley that he should be chiefly known by this one utterance, for he could be so gay and tender too. There are some poems that should never be set to music, and not soon shall I forget the shock which I experienced at a ship's concert when our jovial purser flung away his cigarette, rose to his towering height, expanded his not inconsiderable chest, and in a deep bass, which we had already heard in a comic song, burst into his second number.

' Out of the night that covers me '

he began, and went pitilessly on to the end, such an obstacle to musical rhythm and vocal expression as—

' How charged with punishments the scroll '

having been rushed rather than jumped.

What a benefactor Henley was in the days of the *Scots Observer* and the *National Observer* ! Sixpences were never so readily and excitingly banded. Apart from the editorial comments and regular criticism, with their intolerance and even insolence, there was always something notable among the outside contributions : a Barrack-room Ballad by Kipling ; a highwayman story by Marriott Watson ; a poem by T. E. Brown (who had been Henley's schoolmaster at Gloucester) ; a glimpse of Pierre and his people by Gilbert Parker ; a hint of the supernatural by Murray Gilchrist ; a

social satire by G. S. Street ; a fantasy of childhood by Kenneth Grahame ; a tale of mean streets by Arthur Morrison ; an historical cameo by G. W. Steevens ; an anonymous joke, but signed all over, by Barrie.

We have good weekly reviews to-day, but none of them carry such guns, nor, if they all combined, would they be so well armed. Henley's special gift—chiefly exercised between 1889 and 1894—was to find young men, and, having found them, to draw the best from them. When he ceased to be their inspiration, many of them became mute or ordinary.

Although I tried hard, I never succeeded in getting anything accepted by the *National Observer*. In fact I have been a good deal rejected all my life, and even during 1931 an effort of mine made the rounds in vain. But that was a short story, and story-telling is not one of my gifts. Having been fortunate in finding editors who let me do very much as I liked, I have been less under the necessity of sending articles out at a venture than the ordinary free-lance. First came the *Globe* ; then the *Academy* ; and then the *Sunday Times*—with *Punch* as a friend all the time. Too easy.

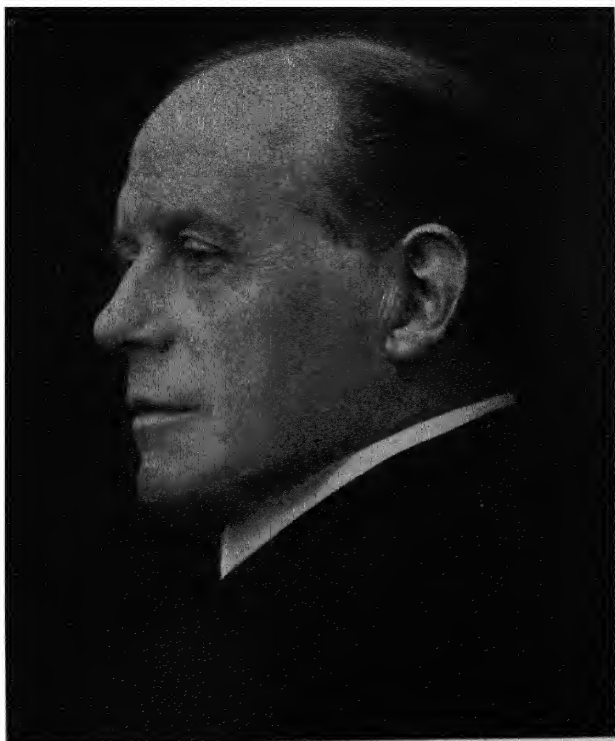
It was an article by Henley in the *National Observer*, afterwards reprinted in his *Views and Reviews*, which sent me to a Bond Street dealer's to see my first Corots—four magnificent examples, the property of a Scotch collector—and thus to lay the foundation of my interest in painting. I had not, hitherto, been bored by picture galleries, but I had brought no thought to bear upon them. I now began to analyse the pleasure they gave me, and to ask myself why, of two artists drawing and applying pigment with equal ability, one moved me and one left me cold. Since then I have seen hundreds of thousands of pictures all over the world, yet I am still never so elated as when entering a gallery. And this though I am myself incapable of delineating more than just recognizably anything on earth. It was to deal with my crude efforts with a pencil that the rubber forests of Malaya were ordained.

The only principle which has guided my writing about pictures has been to attempt to pass on the pleasure or even the thrill caused by them, rather than to criticize. I do however lay claim to one discovery which could have been made only by an expert student of art ; and that is that if you rub lamp-black on your fox-terrier's paw, the impression it makes on a sheet of paper is exceedingly like Whistler's signature.

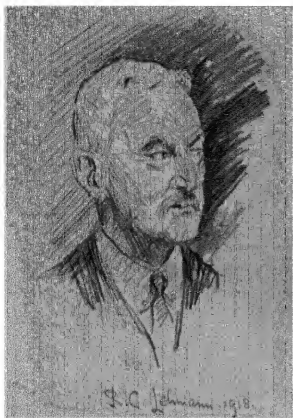
Of all the talkers known to me, Charles Whibley, Henley's right-hand man on the *National Observer*, was the most uncompromising and abusive. His *bêtes-noires* were so numerous that we might have been in Hayti : hardly a white to be seen ; but when a white came within his purview his appreciation was as emphatic as his censure. The 'Musings Without Method' which he contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* for many years give only a faint idea of his conversational method, for they lack his forcible language. When Whibley liked, he was a tireless champion ; but he did not like much.

George Moore I met once only and found him to be a monologist. He collared the table and held it for an hour with a précis of Flaubert's humorous novel *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, the story of the two old retired Frenchmen who had nothing to do after busy lives but to instruct their minds. Flaubert's novel is one of the longest ever written ; George Moore gave us the gist and the flavour of it so thoroughly that one might almost say there was no need to read it at all. This he did in orderly sentences with the mirthful mirthlessness that one finds so often in Irish talkers, yet relishing his task all the while.

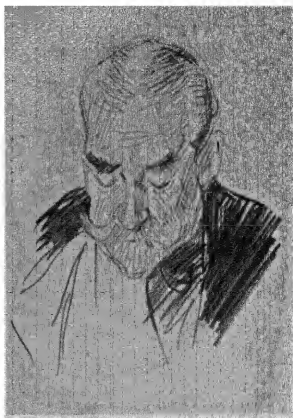
I remember him saying that the appeal of all fiction, all drama, is that of the peep-show. Just as children loved the peep-show, so did their elders love the play and the novel. Just as Punch and Judy was a peep-show, so was *Vanity Fair* a peep-show, *The School for Scandal* a peep-show, *Far From the Madding Crowd* a peep-show, *Madame Bovary* a peep-show, his own *Esther Waters* a peep-show. There was either a keyhole to look through or the fourth wall was down.



SIR OWEN SEAMAN, BART.



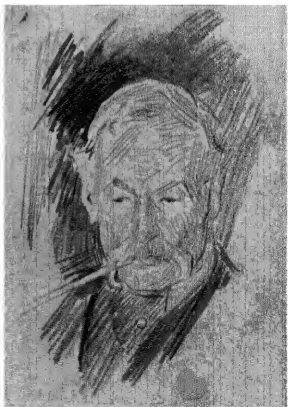
R. C. LEHMANN



SIR F. C. BURNAND



LINLEY SAMBOURNE



SIR JOHN TENNIEL

SKETCHES BY SIR BERNARD PARTRIDGE

*Drawn on the backs of Punch menus*

Every time he said peep-show his voice became more Irish, his cold blue eyes, which ought to have been twinkling, more cold and blue.

Bernard Shaw, another Irishman with blue eyes, is also incapable of melting. There can be no rule, however, because Hilaire Belloc, who is partly Irish—the rest of him is French and in appearance he is intensely French—so rejoices in his own jokes that his eyes dissolve and disappear behind them. I like that.

But when it comes to the enjoyment of the jokes we ourselves make, there is no one to surpass, in appreciative delight, Stephen Leacock. The inextinguishable mirth into which he can be projected by his own humour is one of the most tonic spectacles I have ever witnessed.

Although many people think of Leacock as an American humorist, he is a Canadian by residence and a Professor of Political Economy at McGill University by calling. He was, however, born in England and brought up in Hampshire, at Hambledon, the home, in the second half of the eighteenth century, of the famous cricket club conducted by Richard Nyren. Leacock has not only a love of England but a love of cricket, and therefore, having read my book called *The Hambledon Men*, it was not unnatural that he should suggest, on one of his too infrequent visits to this country, that he and I should devote a Sunday to reviving his early memories.

It was a dazzling day in midwinter and we travelled by road, getting to Hambledon at a quarter to one. There were on our arrival two or three villagers in the bar, where Leacock at once constituted himself host, and while we drank he mentioned some family details which the oldest of the company was able, with great deliberation, to corroborate. Then, having ordered lunch, we went into the churchyard to look for a certain tombstone.

On returning to the inn at about five minutes past one we found it full of Hambledonians to whom the good news had miraculously spread, and for another half-hour the returned prodigal, as he seemed to be considered, was

engaged in filling, clinking and emptying glasses. By the time we reached the upper room where our bacon and eggs had long been cooling, Hambledon, though it was Sunday dinner-time, was in full song. John Nyren's veritable barleycorn, 'such as would put the souls of three butchers into one weaver', might have been at work.

I must bring this recollection of Stephen Leacock to a close by confessing to one of the worst blunders of my career as a publisher's Reader. Having, in 1910, an early copy of his *Literary Lapses* in the first Canadian edition, I wrote an enthusiastic article on it but neglected to mention it to my employer. John Lane, having read the article, at once secured the English rights and the author has remained with the Lane firm ever since.

It was the work on the *Academy* that brought me into touch with the most fastidious mind I have ever known: Mrs. Meynell's. Here the style surely was the woman, and the wonder was that she could maintain the detachment necessary for her work, both in prose and poetry, and still be the adored mother of a noisy and numerous brood. Yet, at her house in Palace Court, you found her, not a child set in the midst of elders, but a priestess set in the midst of children, sharing their nonsense but thinking her own thoughts. One wants a new word to describe this aloofness: she was not apart, because all their feelings she shared, and yet she carried her own sanctuary with her. But I must not give the false impression that Mrs. Meynell was alien to this world: her fun was instant and it was a house of laughter, remaining so till she died; while she herself was still, to the end, although there were then grandchildren to swell the rabble, the most guarded and revered mother I have ever seen.

Those were great days when once a week in the *Pall Mall Gazette* there was a 'Ware of Autolycus' by Mrs. Meynell. No one could have been less of a journalist than she, but that did not matter: in the midst of the riot of news and comment, rumour and sensation, turmoil and restlessness that make up an evening paper, came this silver rivulet, cool,

limpid and peaceful. Mrs. Meynell wrote the calmest prose of any, with every word weighed in the balance.

I group her slender volume of *Poems* with A. E. Housman's: not that they are alike in texture, but both are authentic and reserved, the best and only the best. What she thought of the *Shropshire Lad* I am not aware; but I am sure of this, that had I opened the conversation with the glowing eulogy I should desire, she would not have expressed admiration in order to spare my confusion, nor would her condemnation have been so delivered as to make me uncomfortable. One favourite argument we had, to which I used to lead the way from sheer love of mischief, and that was about Gray's 'Elegy'. Poor Gray, he could get no marks from her; whereas the 'Elegy' is one of my favourite poems. But she was implacable. In her later years she amused herself by revaluing a number of books, and the last time I saw her she expressed her amazement that *The Vicar of Wakefield* had ever won its place as a classic.

After having been essentially Londoners for a very long time, the Meynells moved to Sussex, and it was there that Mrs. Meynell's last years were spent. She kept her mind young, but in all outward respects was of the past—playing croquet in skirts which swept the grass. Here Wilfrid Meynell, whom one would have thought to be intensely urban, became the complete country squire, or rather patriarch, for all round the paternal home sprang up smaller cottages for his children and their families, while on his shelves a Sussex library began to accumulate. Just as the house in Palace Court and afterwards the flat in Granville Place had been meeting-places of poets and critics, novelists and artists, so did the Greatham settlement near Pulborough become a place of call for the young intellectuals.

I think that Hewlett and Conrad, when 'crowned' by the *Academy*, received their cheques through the post, but Stephen Phillips had to attend in person at Morgan Richards' house, where, at a large afternoon party, the presentation was made. I can with the inward eye again see Mrs.



Richards, a warm-hearted impulsive woman from Virginia, dragging the reluctant poet, a heavy man six feet tall, through the crowd the whole length of the room towards her husband at the far end, calling out at intervals, ' John, here he is ! '—' John, here he is ! '

Poor Phillips, his star remained in the ascendant for only a brief season and was then utterly extinguished. I am sure that this was wrong ; he may not have been the inspired poet that Sidney Colvin thought him, or the inspired dramatist that William Archer thought him, but he was the author of some very beautiful passages. It was a case of sacrifice through excess of friendship and zeal. Immoderate praises from the few can antagonize the many. Phillips was the victim at once of this laudation and of his own inability to stand oats, as the grooms say, and he ingloriously faded out. Never does one see his work to-day, either in his own books or in anthologies, yet ' Marpessa ' is filled with loveliness.

It was through the crowning of Maurice Hewlett's *Pan and the Young Shepherd* that I came to know the author, who was then working at the Record Office, in the same street as the *Academy*, Chancery Lane.

I can't remember anyone with a more vivid personality than Hewlett's, or anyone who was a more wilful aristocrat than he. In every company he was the most noticeable figure, with his distinguished clothes, his finely modelled head, almost like a skull, his dark moustache and imperial, his crooked mouth and his eyes sparkling under their Mephistophelian brows. His voice was decisive and resonant, exactly suited both to his enthusiasms or to his sardonic turn, and he laughed without any reservations. As a talker he had fire and gusto, but no polarity, and he was so much of an improviser of life-long convictions that any very earnest advocate on the other side could turn him round. Although he said everything with complete finality, I have seen him box the compass several times in one evening. When describing an Italian scene, or relating a humorous incident, or emphasizing an absurd person's absurdity, he was irresist-

ille. And his high-handed, light-hearted way of dismissing impostors was so attractive that one lured him on.

What a panache he had, in his heyday, and how difficult it was, later, when he became anti-social, to keep pace with his caprices and tangents! If he had retained his Record Office work and continued to write in his spare time he would probably have been happier; but success gave him the means to be a country gentleman and answerable to no one, and he flung himself into his various Abbotsfords with terrific spirit. The trouble was that his natural restlessness and artistic experimentalism made him despise his earlier books which the public had welcomed with such warmth—*The Forest Lovers* and the *Little Novels of Italy*—and take to new forms. He wore himself out in collecting material for his two great historical romances, *Richard Yea and Nay* and *The Queen's Quair*. Both were good, but they were far less acceptable than the earlier ones, which taxed only his invention and were carried high by their gaiety, insouciance and freedoms.

After the historical vein had been sufficiently explored, he took to novels of modern complexities too much in the manner of Meredith, the worst model any author could have, and his public receded even farther from him. It was a great pity, for one began to wonder if there was a real authentic Hewlett at all. Of all his varied work I personally liked the play, *Pan and the Young Shepherd*, best.

In his earlier days Hewlett was almost an Italian. He went to Italy every year and laid the scenes of his stories there. But later he lost sight of it and concentrated on the English countryside. He took an ancient house in Wiltshire, on a yearly agreement, very uncomfortable and foreign but genuinely medieval, with a trout stream, and spent a fortune on a garden of fruit trees and delphiniums. Not in the least disliking discomfort, he ought to have been happy; but he wasn't. His restlessness grew on him. Just as he changed his style, so he changed his homes. He moved from Wiltshire to a remote district of Sussex, south of Chichester, where he had another uncomfortable foreign

house and not so good a garden and no trout stream. Then he went back to Wiltshire again for the last phase, took long solitary walks among the Downs in a poetical cloak, and put the soil in the forefront of his meditations, displacing naughty ladies and tapestry. He talked of entering Parliament as the champion of the farm labourer and worked feverishly on an epic poem of English tillage called *The Hodgiad*, which he feverishly completed. It was a noble project but did not quite come off, as we say. He died a disappointed man, I fear, and I doubt if his books will find many new readers. They were vigorous and full of brio, but they were derivative, and derivative work seldom has a second innings. But books are not all; he was a most tonic personality: I find myself missing him continually; he always made me feel fifty per cent better.

## CHAPTER XI

### BARRIE AND OTHERS

*The Little White Bird*—Peter Pan's beginnings—*The Greenwood Hat*—George Meredith—Henry James—A dissuasive blurb—Max Beerbohm—Baffled limners—Barrie as a speaker—A Thames-side eyrie—A St. Andrew's Speech day—Mixed LL.D.'s—Dr. Ellen Terry—Barrie's cricket team—Artists at the wicket—A. E. W. Mason—John Galsworthy—Gabriel Wells

IT was at Hewlett's house that I first met Barrie, and I remember it was just before the publication of *The Little White Bird* because when I asked him why he had never reprinted his incomparable story of 'The Inconsiderate Waiter', he said he was working it into a book at that moment. This then would be 1902. I had read everything he had written, including *Better Dead* and *An Edinburgh Eleven*, and had seen all his plays, including the burlesque on Ibsen with which, I believe, he began his dramatic career, and in which Toole performed, without, according to the author, having the slightest idea as to what it was all about. But Irving had told him to produce it and therefore he did so. The curtain fell, if I remember rightly, on all the characters coming to a violent end under a notice board stating 'Rubbish may be shot here'.

It was in *The Little White Bird* that Peter Pan made his first appearance, soon afterwards to be transmuted into dramatic immortality; and I was one of those who heard the play read by its creator before it was acted. No one reads better than Barrie, who has more of the actor's gifts than many a man who earns a living on the stage. His constant companion at that time was the big St. Bernard, Luath, who was transformed in the play into Nanna the

nurse, and every night he crossed the road from Leinster Corner to a gate in Kensington Gardens, of which he had been given a key, to join this simple and benign creature in a ramble. Often they must have found themselves very near the spot where George Frampton's charming Peter Pan memorial was some years later to stand. Not only was Nanna real ; the Darling family were from life too. But it is not for me to speak of these matters when the very beautiful preface to the printed edition of the play says all that need be said. Enough that one of them, Michael, a grandson of George du Maurier, was the most remarkably gifted boy I have ever known.

Barrie's latest book has been seen by very few people, for it was issued privately, at Christmas, 1930, and limited to fifty copies. Therein, under the name James Anon, he relates some of the most significant passages in his writing career, taking for title *The Greenwood Hat*, since it was Frederick Greenwood, the editor of the *St. James's Gazette* in the late eighteen-eighties when Barrie came from Nottingham to try his luck as a free-lance in London, for whom he bought his first topper. He first wrote to Greenwood, who had been printing his articles for some months, asking should he leave the provinces and come to town. 'No,' said Greenwood ; so he came.

It happened that on the morning of the day on which a complimentary dinner was given to Greenwood, on April 9, 1905, with Barrie in the chair, I was calling at Flint Cottage, Box Hill, the home of George Meredith, and he entrusted me with a bunch of violets from his garden to give to his old friend. When, four years later, Meredith died, it was Barrie who wrote the most beautiful of the tributes to the dead Master.

Meredith was very handsome, and he knew it. His thick, strong hair, his pointed beard, his flowing pink tie, his rough tweed suit—all were trained with the greatest care up to the point where negligence and dandyism meet. He was vain, there is no doubt about it ; but he had something to be vain of : everything about him was distinguished,

even aristocratic, except perhaps some of his opinions. True aristocrats don't bother to abuse the world. But he couldn't restrain himself, he was Welsh and contemptuous and voluble and angry and enthusiastic. His conversation was very like him. I remember a phrase of his about Amsterdam. I had just come back from Holland and was telling him about those old canal-streets, the Keizersgracht and the Heerengracht, with their dark façades reflected in the water. 'Ah yes!' he said, 'the very plebs of the Venetian idea.' Talking of reviewers and appreciative friends, he said that one of the acutest trials of authorship was to be praised for the wrong things.

I should have liked to ask him why he made his books so difficult, but did not dare. One does not trifle with lightning. Difficult as they may be—with the talk always keyed up to more than concert pitch—if you persevere, what glorious results await you in their knowledge of the human heart, their sense of comedy!

All the same, I find it hard to argue with people who say that they can't persevere; that they don't want to fight with an author but to be wooed by him; that while a poet can be as involved as he wishes, novelists should make things easy: that's what prose is for. It is difficult to rebut this; all that one can reply is that Meredith was a genius. Reading *The Egoist* is like climbing the Alps, with the exhilaration of the mountain air and the excitement of gaining the summit. As for *One of our Conquerors*—everything is in it and it is still in advance of the times.

Personally I prefer Meredith's cryptic fireworks to the crab-like approaches of Henry James. You have there an author who at times really is unreadable. I met him once only, late in his life, at Lady Colvin's. He led me aside and was very malicious. In the choicest of words, so carefully chosen that one was in an agony for fear he should fail to find them, changing and refining all the time and postponing the end of the sentence to the last possible moment, he said something detrimental about most of the company. But that was only his way, I think. He must

have been very kind underneath or he wouldn't have been so much liked and even loved. Stevenson called him 'the Prince of Men'. It might have been more princely to have controlled his tongue, but then he wouldn't have been so amusing.

The best piece of writing by Henry James that I ever read was the précis of his novel *The Ambassadors* which he wrote for the guidance of the editor of *Harper's Magazine* when there was a possibility of the full-length novel being a serial. This was late in the 1890's when, for a few months, I was associated with Harper's London house, in the days when Colonel Harvey was at the head. Such was James's conscientiousness that the précis ran to a few thousand words; and it said all. The following description of one of his collections of short stories, *The Finer Grain*, which he prepared for the publishers, but which I imagine was not used and has come inexplicably into my possession, will illustrate his desire not to be misunderstood. It is far indeed from the 'jacket' style of to-day.

'*The Finer Grain* consists of a series of five Tales representing in each case a central figure (by which Mr. Henry James is apt to mean a central and a lively *consciousness*) involved in one of those greater or less tangles of circumstance of which the measure and from which the issue is in the vivacity and the active play of the victim's or the victor's sensibility. Each situation is thereby more particularly a moral drama, an experience of the special soul and intelligence presented (the sentient, perceptive, reflective part of the protagonist, in short), but with high emphasis clearly intended on its wearing for the hero or the heroine the quality of the agitating, the challenging personal *adventure*. In point of fact, indeed, it happens in each case to be the hero who exhibits this finer grain of accessibility to suspense or curiosity, to mystification or attraction—in other words, to moving experience: it is by his connection with and interest in the "grain" woman that his predicament, with its difficult solution, is incurred. And the series of illustrations of how such predicaments *may* spring up, and even be really characteristic, consider-

ably ranges : from Paris to London and New York, and then back again, to ambiguous yet at the same time unmistakable English, and ultra-English, ground.'

—That, I assure you, is not an imitation. It is genuine Jacobean.

The only other writer who in conversation chooses his words with the care of Henry James, but obtaining, I think, more exquisite results, is Max Beerbohm. To watch him assaying, rejecting and selecting his adjectives, no matter how trivial the incident to be related may be, is a lesson in mental responsibility. For my own words I am responsible only after I have corrected the proof ; but Max begins right : his tongue is on oath. Nothing is more irritating than to watch him being hurried by some other member of the party who either has no sense of epithets or prefers the sound of his own voice. Such interruptions are like watering a priceless Château Lafite. Of the two, Henry James or Max Beerbohm, I would rather listen to Max delicately feeling his way, because although Henry James could be very amusing, Max is a humorist to the core, seeing everything from a humorist's individual point of view.

This reminds me that the page of drawings of me made by Max Beerbohm which I reproduce was intended rather to illustrate my catholic choice of clubs than for facial beauty. As to the accuracy of any portrait of oneself, having no more trustworthy guide than a mirror how can one express an opinion ? But of the many artists who, usually after dinner, have had a shot at my indifferent features, all have said that there is something in them that eludes the pencil. Augustus John, Orpen, Dulac, all tried, in a disrespectful mood, and failed. More serious was the attempt of William, now Sir William, Rothenstein, in his studio, where a year or so ago, I sat on three afternoons while he measured, recorded and talked. The talk was excellent and the picture, when finished, was a perfect likeness—of Beerbohm Tree.

• To return to Barrie—he is at his best with children ; in



fact, he becomes a child himself, bringing to that rôle endless resources of fantasy, inventiveness and fun. His letters to children are a delight, and should they have been preserved—as I hope, but as he, if he really holds that all correspondence should be destroyed (a point of view in which I intensely disagree with him), is far from wishing—an entrancing book would result.

Barrie is the most amusing after-dinner speaker I have heard. He leaves nothing to chance, both preparing and committing to memory; yet conveying the impression of weary improvisation. He also prefers a butt, or several, whom he finds in the room. I should not, however, call him a good talker. In fact, as often as not, he is the reverse: a discourager of talk in others, an absolute non-conductor. But whatever he does say—and he is often more vocal with new acquaintances than with old—is good, wise, humorous and, not infrequently, sardonic. The definition of a friend as ‘some one you can be silent with’ he can test to the full. He can be entrancing on the plays he wants some day to write; he can have you laughing almost in agony by farcical exaggerations of some incident that happened to himself.

Barrie has one of the most attractive flats in London, the top floor of a house at the western end of the Adelphi, looking over the Thames, with an outside platform from which you can see the Houses of Parliament, the peaks of the Tower Bridge, with St. Paul’s, magnificently black and white and massive, midway between them, and in the south the heights of Sydenham. The principal room has a farmhouse ingle nook, on the beam of which too many people have banged their heads, I among them, and a great fire of logs. On a bench in this room within a room Barrie twists himself into knots as he talks, or paces up and down, always with a pipe just lighted, or in full blast, or just about to be lighted. He either smokes to live, or lives to smoke.

When Barrie was retiring from the Lord Rectorship of St. Andrew’s University in 1922, he drew up the usual list of nominees for the honorary degree of LL.D. and I was

among them. Among the others were Charles Whibley, Colonel Freyberg the V.C., Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Douglas Shields the surgeon, Lord Wester Wemyss the admiral, John Galsworthy, and Ellen Terry. Ellen Terry, who had become very short-sighted, was placed in my care, and I steered her about in her cap and robes—Portia revived.

This was my first experience of a solemn investiture and my head still rings from the din made by the students during the preliminary speeches. Not one word did they allow anybody to hear. Then, however, came the Lord Rector and order was established. Barrie, who had chosen Courage for his theme, began rather nervously, making spasmodic movements with a large paper-knife which he had found on the table. 'Put it down, Jimmy,' cried a loud-voiced student, 'or you'll cut your throat.' He put it down and in a few moments' time had the great hall in perfect control and played on it as he wished. The address was afterwards printed in pamphlet form, for all to read: a perfect example of Barrie's gift of mingling grave and gay.

It was after the address that the chosen guests became Doctors of Law of St. Andrews, the actual bestowal of that degree being made by Earl Haig as Chancellor of the University. This was preceded by some very charming remarks by the Public Orator on our signal and shining merits. I hardly need to say that Ellen Terry and the V.C. were the most popular of the recipients.

In *The Greenwood Hat* Barrie tells the story of his cricket team, the Allahakbaris—meaning 'God <sup>helps</sup> ~~helps~~ us'—of which I was a member. We used to play the artists and various elevens brought together for the purpose. We played at Shere, at Esher, at Frensham Ponds, at Farnham, at Shackleford—all in Surrey—and were not distressed by defeat. J. C. Snaith, who had been tried for Notts, was our trump card with the ball, but Barrie bowled slow left, with an action very like J. C. White of Somerset and England, and had to be watched. Will Meredith, George Meredith's son, kept wicket with a magnificent composure and disdain of byes; C. T. Smith (who under the name of

Charles Turley writes some of the best school stories) wherever he stood fielded like a county player ; Conan Doyle, who was very good, was our best all-rounder, and Harry Graham, the librettist, batted as though he had been properly taught. Another useful man was Walter Frith, son of the painter of 'Derby Day'. Barrie's little privately-printed book describing the members of the original team, of which I was not one, and their first antagonists, an eleven brought together by Mary Anderson at Broadway, is now very rare and a collector's piece, fetching three figures. In addition to regular players, there were occasional extra men, such as Charles Whibley, who was said by his captain, adapting a well-known phrase, to hit 'blooming hard, blooming high and blooming seldom', and Hewlett, who used to turn out in perfect flannels but was not proficient.

Among the artists, who, since they never do anything to tire them, were always stronger than their adversaries, the chief scores were made by Henry Ford, the illustrator of Andrew Lang's fairy books. They also had, in G. H. Swinstead, a formidable performer with both bat and ball. H. H. La Thangue was one of their keenest supporters. E. A. Abbey was usually captain, bringing into the game all his American energy and a terrifying velocity in throwing which he had acquired at baseball ; but otherwise he was not to be feared.

It was through these cricket matches that I first met A. E. W. Mason, whom I look upon as one of the most fortunate of authors, for all life is to him an adventure. He has had a varied career. After leaving Oxford he tried the stage, acting both with the Benson Company and with the Compton Comedy Company. Then thinking he would rather be an author than a mummer, he wrote *The Courtship of Morrice Buckler*, and, while waiting for it to be published, filled the time by a series of lectures on the continuity of the Church of England. Later, he collaborated with Andrew Lang in an excellent Jacobite novel. But it is by his own unaided romances, which made him an idol of the circulating libraries, that he is best known, among them one

or two detective stories that stand very high in their class. I was with him at a melodrama at the Ambigu when he first thought of writing *At the Villa Rose*. He has written plays with success and has had them made into film versions at great personal profit. And all the time he has been free from care; he has travelled everywhere, for fun, sport or background; and, needing no more paraphernalia than paper and pen, he has been independent of desk and library. When the War broke out he falsified his age in order to enlist, and was given a commission in a cavalry regiment. His health not being equal to this, he was employed in the secret service, first in Spain and then in Mexico.

Thinking once that a little Parliamentary experience would be good for him, he stood as a Liberal for Coventry, and was returned with a big majority. I ought to know, for I was one of his tellers, my duty being to stand by a table when the votes were being counted and see that there was no hanky-panky. After the result was known the people filled the street opposite the hotel, demanding a speech, but directly the new member opened his mouth to make one, they cheered him down. After twenty minutes of this turmoil there was a momentary lull, of which Mason took advantage. 'My constituents!' he said; no other word, and retired into the room. Barrie, who was also one of the tellers, used this concise oration in his play *What Every Woman Knows*.

If I envied anybody, I should envy Mason for the reason that he always has time. That, I think, is one of the marks of eminence: to work hard yet never to have to plead work as an excuse when an attractive proposition is put forward. When he is in London he misses little and plays several rubbers a day, yet is not behindhand with the new story that his readers are expecting.

Mason, I might add, is not only a good talker, with many curious experiences, both his own and others, to relate, but a most stimulating listener. His laugh is famous in both hemispheres.

It was when I was staying with Mason at Weymouth that I first met Thomas Hardy. We had been intending to spend the time in yachting, but a storm springing up we took a car instead, explored Dorset and called on Hardy at 'Max Gate', where I hope we did nothing to support his famous remark that the chief—or even only—pleasure he received from such invasions was the expression of pained surprise on his visitors' faces as they realized his unimportance. But though slight and unassertive and weary, unimportant he certainly was not.

I remember that Alfred Austin had just died and the question of the new Laureate was being debated. Hardy said that his vote was for Mrs. Meynell, not only for her distinction, but because there was no reason why a woman should make a worse Laureate than a man.

'Max Gate' was a depressing villa in a Dorchester road, with trees hard against the windows so that the sitting-room was dark. Unlike his great contemporary, Meredith, Hardy said what he had to say very simply, with an air of profound melancholy. But he did not disdain gossip or jokes and he displayed an ordinary author's interest in other authors. He knew what was happening in every publisher's office. I believe that all authors, however eminent and affectedly remote, do; it is part of their sentence. But Hardy was not one of those who skirmish to get the talk round to their own books: he had made up his mind about those and was in no need of further praise. I could not, however, refrain from letting him know that I thought *Far From the Madding Crowd* his masterpiece in prose. It must have been a great moment to pick up the *Cornhill*, in 1873, and find the opening chapters of that story.

Had Mrs. Meynell been appointed Laureate, she would, I feel sure, have done as little in the way of producing official poems as Robert Bridges, but she might not have declined to write to order quite so roundly as he. 'I'll see them damned first,' he said.

Bridges was a downright man, scholarly, assertive, cranky,

quarrelsome, with a handsome fighting head. But his poems, although they have beauty and are of the greatest interest to other artificers, lack the breath of life. Yet he personally tingled with vitality. He began as a doctor, but on marrying the daughter of Alfred Waterhouse, the architect and squire of Yattendon in Berkshire, who had married the sister of Thomas Hodgkin, the historian, settled there and, in his zeal for church music, produced the *Yattendon Hymnal* and led the choir. Later, Beeching, who had married Bridges's niece, was presented to the living. At first all went well, but Beeching, also a precisian, was not incapable of pugnacity too, and when Bridges, as choir master, seemed to be taking too large a share in the proceedings, there was a row, culminating one Sunday in Bridges leaving the church in the middle of the service with all his boys behind him. Thereafter he attended no more, but on Sunday mornings would stand at the gate urging the parishioners not to go in.

It was at Yattendon that Beeching wrote that most diverting book, *Pages from a Private Diary*, where parochial division plays no part. His *Paradise of English Poetry* is second only to *The Golden Treasury*.

If I were of a less restless disposition, Mason would not be the most enviable among my literary friends, but John Galsworthy. Because John Galsworthy always seemed to me to have more benevolence, fewer cares and a larger number of faithful readers than any author I know. When I was in the East Indies in 1931 I found that he was there the most popular living English writer. Always calm, always just, always courteous, and always surrounded by beautiful things, whether in his house at Hampstead or in his house in Sussex, he belonged to another world than ours.

The only thing I could not envy him was the desk at which he stood to do his work. Thinking it might improve my own style, I had one made by his carpenter, but I found the process of writing on foot very fatiguing. All the Forsytes, however, came to life at a standing desk. We owe a double debt of gratitude to Galsworthy, for not

only did he himself give us novels and plays, but, as I have mentioned elsewhere in this book, it was he who urged Conrad, when a beginner, to go on writing. I should be far less poor if I had acted upon John's advice in a different *métier*. He had a wonderful eye for racing form and was as fond of Newmarket Heath as I am of a cricket ground.

It was great fun at the Royal Literary Fund banquet in London in 1929, when Galsworthy took the chair and presented the manuscript of his play *Loyalties* to be sold to the highest bidder. The Anniversary Committee, of which I was chairman, had to do everything they could for the success of the evening, and therefore Gabriel Wells, the American second-hand book dealer, and W. T. Spencer, the London second-hand book dealer, were invited to be present and Mason was prevailed upon to act as auctioneer.

On entering the Hotel Victoria Rooms, the first person to meet Gabriel's eye was his rival.

'Spencer being here has cost me a thousand pounds,' he said.

'I hope so,' I replied.

The bidding began at £500, offered by A. L. Humphreys, £600 from Captain Harry Graham, £700 from another conspirator, and so on until £1,000 was reached, the figure at which the donor had expressed his intention of buying the manuscript in. But after the £1,000 mark was passed the two professionals got properly to work and eventually it fetched £3,300, Spencer dropping out at the previous bid. 'It's more than it's worth,' said Gabriel, 'but I always give away so much a year in charity, and I shall call the overplus part of this year's donation.' In 1928, at another London dinner of a similar kind, he had in the same generous way bought the manuscript of Barrie's *Twelve Pound Look* for a sum of four figures.

## CHAPTER XII

### ARNOLD BENNETT AND OTHERS

A useful impediment—' Un Nouveau Dieu '—Victorian furniture and the latest art—Wish Wynn—H. G. Wells—A Georgian giant—Burlesques of Novels—A ' Laconic '—Maurice Baring—A musical lunch—Hilaire Belloc—A new language—Triolets—Father Knox—Dedications

**M**Y first meeting with Arnold Bennett was in 1896, when he came to the *Academy* office to discuss with the editor a series which he had in contemplation. He was wearing a white bowler hat, and was assertive and dogmatic in a high-pitched voice, liable at any moment to stop suddenly and struggle for life. To the end he was at the mercy of this difficulty, although for a while he relieved it by repeating the alphabet until the required initial letter arrived. Like most stammerers, he did not appreciate help. Arnold's impediment led to the most dramatic effects, for, with great good luck, or great skill, it asserted itself just before the last word of the sentence, and as his sentences were chiefly critical, about people or books—most often about those people who write books—the last word was usually an adjective or an epithet, and it was this word that we wanted and were willing to wait for. Just before it, would come the pause ; he would throw back his head, open his mouth, close his eyes, almost as though suspended in the air—and then suddenly release the word. The result was inevitably a burst of laughter from the listener, the delayed word, commonplace enough had it arrived naturally, having the weight of an epigram. The impediment actually was neither a stammer nor stutter ; it was interrupted current.



Of the exact nature of Charles Lamb's similar disability we have no record, but I fancy it must have resembled Arnold's and not have been the ordinary comic incapacity, as the stage reproduces it, in pronouncing fluently labials or dentals: b-b-b-b-b and d-d-d-d-d. There is at any rate one story to support this theory; that of the punning competition on the subject of herbs. Everyone having made his contribution, it was Lamb's turn. 'All right,' he said. 'Don't be in a hurry. It's . . . . . cumin.' There the suspense, as with Arnold, led up to the surprise of the *dénouement*.

It was perhaps this difficulty in being fluent in speech that made Arnold's movements so significant. Everything that he did meant something. Even when I first knew him he was not a quick walker and he acted with deliberation; but latterly his progresses were almost processional. During the period when he fell so strangely under the spell of dancing, people used to say, at this or that night club: 'Come and watch Arnold Bennett dance.' But none of the amusement which his ponderous advances and revolutions might be causing (and he knew what was going on; those fine eyes missed nothing) could interfere with his enjoyment. He was fond of lawn tennis too, and without haste managed to keep his end up against far more nimble performers.

One of Arnold's little peculiarities, in restaurants or in other people's houses, was to look at the trade-marks beneath the plates to see from which factory in the Five Towns they had come.

When I stayed with him at 'Comarques', his Georgian mansion at Thorpe-le-Soken in Essex, in its own grounds, I found him sunning himself in the status of a country gentleman. He was well, active, and full—too full—of raillery of his Marguerite, the tall, shrewd but slightly puzzled French woman whom he had married during his long sojourn in France. I had with me a Pekinese spaniel whose disdain and self-centred placidity fascinated Mrs. Bennett to such an extent that a few days later she sent me the following verses:

## UN NOUVEAU DIEU

à E. V. LUCAS

Des palais de la Chine antique  
Un sujet un jour fut volé.  
Il traversa l'Adriatique,  
Il devint sujet britannique,  
Le pauvre petit exilé !

Un jour arriva sa sujette ;  
(On ne sait trop par quel moyen)  
Ce fut croyez-le une fête,  
Tous deux en perdirent la tête  
Et créèrent un petit nain.

Ce petit nain à son tour père  
Connut plusieurs petits enfants,  
De père en fils de fille en mère  
Les voici peuplant l'Angleterre  
De ' Pékinèses à feu d'argent '.

Cette étrange race canine  
De jolies femmes est animée  
Elles calment leur humeur chagrine  
Un soir, devant une vitrine  
Où leur beauté est exposée.

Avec leur bourse plus légère  
Et leur humeur calmée un peu  
Les voilà devenues ' mémère '  
Leur mari devenus ' pépère '  
Enfin tous deux un peu gâteaux.

Le Chinois les regarde faire  
Reçois caresses et ne rend rien.  
Il ne cherche pas à leur plaire  
Il désire une chose, se taire,  
Et ne faire attention à rien.

Sa face plate à barbe noire,  
Ses deux gros yeux et son nez court  
Racontent sa tragique histoire,  
La perte de toute sa gloire  
Et la perte de toute sa cour.

L'air renfrogné du solitaire  
 Le rend comique au plus haut point !  
 Il n'était pas né pour la terre,  
 Il a l'air par trop débonnaire,  
 Il doit venir de bien plus loin !

Il est si bon, qu'il porte à rire,  
 Il est si laid, qu'il en est beau.  
 Je vous engage à tout lui dire  
 Ou bien à éclater de rire ! . . . . .  
 Il descend des Dieux de la Chine !

'Comarques' was furnished in what is called Empire style, but the dining-room in Arnold's later George Street flat was entirely early Victorian, including even wax flowers under glass and a family Bible on a circular table. His taste in pictures did not, however, resemble his taste in furniture, but kept up, as far as that was possible, with all the modern tendencies. Capriciously-coloured portraits of himself and his wife, from which the elements of drawing were absent, hung on the walls, and new, newer and newest examples of crazy art were continually arriving. His own water-colours, however, remained untainted : clear, honest impressions of river and sky, such as you may see reproduced in an admirable racy book on Essex by his old friend and mine, J. B. Atkins, the biographer of Russell of the *Times*.

From 'Comarques' we drove to Brightlingsea, where Arnold kept a yacht, the *Velsa*, a Dutch wherry, very comfortable and as deliberate as himself, in which we sailed up and down the estuary. That was his first boat ; later I joined him on his last and more pretentious vessel, with modernist decorations on the cabin walls, in Southampton Water. Always happily conscious of the prosperity that his steady and conscientious work had brought him, Arnold never seemed to be quite so serene and complacent as in his scrupulous yachting attire. He was no navigator ; he was a yacht-owner. To sit in a deck-chair surveying a calm ocean from his own vessel and approving it—not saying of it 'No good', his favourite

"He was a great artist. And this is his statue dishevelled. Surely you ought to be proud of him!"

"He may have been a great artist," said Mrs. Brundley, "as he may not. But for us he was simply a man with the name of a saint, that ~~filled~~ <sup>filled</sup> his mind and ~~interested~~ <sup>interested</sup> the world. And a bad reputation for talking too much and acting the good!

"Well," I said, "he shall live — in fifty years."

"That's just what we shall," said he. "he shall be where Simon Fuge is — dead! However, perhaps we are proud of him. But you don't expect us to show it, do you? That's not our style."

He performed the quasi-writing phenomenon with his eyes. It was his final exhibition of it to me.

"A strange place!" I reflected, as I ate my dinner in the dining-car, with the pressure of Mrs. Brundley's sleeky cheeks still affecting my right hand, and the rich, honest cordiality of her ~~out~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~even~~ <sup>even</sup> in my hand. "A place that is becoming strange!"

And I thought further: He may have been a bonnie, and a chatter, and a man who suffered from cold feet at the wrong moments! And the five towns may have got the better of him, now. But that portrait of the little girl in the ~~background~~ <sup>background</sup> is ~~still~~ <sup>still</sup> waiting there, right in the middle of the five towns. And one day the five towns will have to give it back. By then can you what they like! .... What goes the fellow had, when he was in the right company!

term with which to dismiss a book, but 'First-class'—'class' pronounced like 'gas'—was joy enough, triumph enough.

After he gave up Comarques' he lived for a while 'on the branch'; for several months, for instance, in a suite in the Royal York Hotel at Brighton. Later he took the spacious upper part of a house opposite St. George's church of which I have spoken, where I once spent a very amusing and candid evening, the only other guest being that penetrating student of human relationships, the Countess Russell. But it was at the house in Cadogan Square that he was at his ripest. His position was established; he had become an oracle; and the whole place, from basement to roof, was his: not an immaterial consideration to a man essentially so simple, springing from a matter-of-fact stock. Why he moved again, and to another flat, I never knew; but the step was disastrous; before he had been there a year he was dead.

I have said at the outset of this book that writing has to me always been a pleasure as well as a means of subsistence. The remark is even truer of Arnold. He liked writing so much that he did what I have never done: he kept a diary, and furthermore he kept accounts, and all in the most exquisite hand, as the reproduced page from the original manuscript of one of his short stories, *The Death of Simon Fuge*, which he gave to me, will testify. And the hand with which he wrote was small too; his hands and feet alike were small; but his most remarkable physical characteristic was his eyes: dark and lustrous and soft. I enjoyed his companionship to the full, and not least when he was caustic, as he could be, with infinite roguishness, about other writers. But we had points of disagreement: I could never, for instance, understand his hostility to the Royal Literary Fund, which, with the Authors' Society, is the only organization we have for the relief of those of our profession—his and mine—who have not been too fortunate. His point was that money should not be raised at banquets; nor would he modify his views

when told that experience has shown that, so far as the Royal Literary Fund is concerned, that is the best way. Nor could I share his enthusiasm for cubism and its companion eccentricities or his approval of our novelists' decreasing reserve.

I think his best books are *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Clayhanger* and *Hilda Lessways*, which are in the great tradition of the English novel and exhibit all his patience, his imaginative sympathy, his powers of description and selection. *The Card* is a diverting essay in high spirits, but it and its companion 'frolics', as he called them, are on a lower plane.

Latterly he declined; he was ageing, tiring, and too much in the machine, and I used to think that to give so much time to his weekly reviews—first reading the books and then appraising them, often too highly—was a sad mistake. No creative writer not in need of money should become a reviewing hack. The number of 'masterpieces'—this was a favourite word of his, pronounced in the North of England manner—which he discovered made one a little nervous about his mental stability.

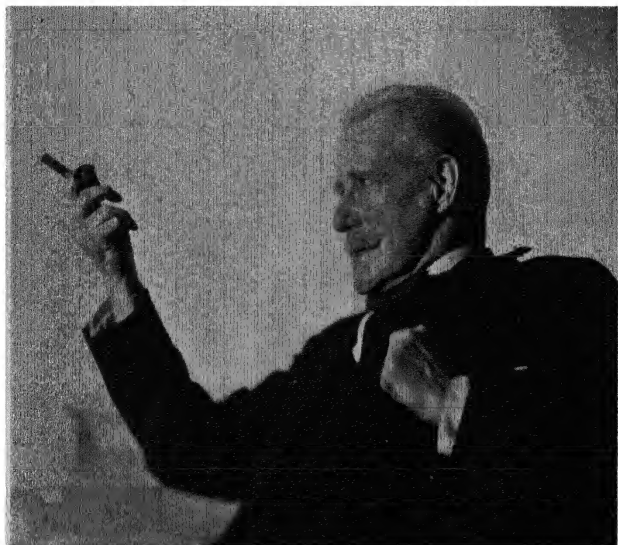
He was in his later years disappointed, if not embittered, by his want of success with plays. He tried and tried but something was wanting. *Milestones*, one must suppose owed much to the technical craft of his collaborator Edward Knoblock, while *The Great Adventure* had the advantage of being acted by Henry Ainley and probably by the only woman on the stage with all the qualifications—although she, the late Wish Wynne, was not on the stage proper but on the Halls. I shall always be proud to think that it was I who, hearing what kind of part had to be filled, took Granville Barker to the London Pavilion to see her and, as it happened, to offer her the engagement.

For a long time Arnold had been doing too much. *Old Wives' Tales* need aloofness, solitude. The more he mixed with people and affairs the more he boiled the pot. He always wrote as well as he could; but it became as well as he could-under-the-circumstances. He enjoyed his position

as an arbiter of taste, as a kindly adviser, as a power behind the scenes ; but it wasn't good for his art. *Mr. Prohack*, *Lord Raingo*, *Imperial Palace*, even *Riceyman Steps*, moving as that was, were all on a lower level than the three great novels of his comparative seclusion. He took me one night through the dark streets at the back of King's Cross to show me Riceyman Steps in being.

No sooner was he dead than one of the morning papers started a correspondence on the question who would take his place. Most newspaper correspondences are foolish, but this was peculiarly so, because no one can take an artist's place. Prime Ministers, Managing Directors, head waiters—these can be duplicated. But an artist, if he is authentic and individual, is unique. Arnold Bennett was unique : the world does not need another like him, it needs another as genuine.

Many years ago the names of Bennett and Wells used to be grouped, just as those of Dickens and Thackeray had been before them. But when Wells took to-day and to-morrow as his province, the association faded out. Bennett became more and more interested in books, Wells more and more interested in facts and deductions from facts. I first met H. G. in 1895 when he was living at Maybury in Surrey and, in addition to writing regularly some of the best short stories ever produced by an Englishman, with amazing fertility of invention and imagination, was just about to bring out his satirical fantasy, *The Wonderful Visit*. Hundreds of those stories have recently been published in a single volume and I doubt if a more remarkable example of one man's variety and vigour can exist. People talk of the Victorian giants as though the Titans were extinct, but apart from H. G.'s novels and his sociological works, I would put forward this collection of short stories in every mood, grave and gay, grotesque and terrible, as a proof that under Edward VII and George V there has been a giant too. It is no small thing to write hundreds of short stories, each a separate effort in invention, each most efficiently shaped and told, among them such unforgettable



SIR BERNARD PARTRIDGE

*From a photograph by Coster*

1938





C. L. GRAVES



L. RAVEN HILL



W. A. LOCKER



E. V. KNOX

SKETCHES BY SIR BERNARD PARTRIDGE  
*Drawn on the backs of Punch menus*

masterpieces as *The Country of the Blind* and *The Valley of Spiders*.

That collection is merely one of Wells's many achievements. Then come the exercises in prophecy, requiring a very special order of brains, which began in 1895 with *The Time Machine* and comprise *When the Sleeper Wakes*; then the humorous novels of domestic life, where every reader can check the author's fidelity to fact, such as *Kipps*, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Mr. Polly*, *The Wheels of Chance*. Then the more serious and introspective novels, where human relationships are mordantly dissected, such as *Tono Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, *Joan and Peter*, and *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*; and lastly the comprehensive surveys of mankind past, present and future, such as *The Outline of History* and *The Science of Life*. And the author of all this remarkable work is to-day—1932—only sixty-six, a trifling age for a seer, and looks very little older than in those Maybury days in the eighteen nineties, when he was living from hand to mouth. His blue eyes are just as quizzical. When prosperity began to smile, he built, on Charles Voysey's designs, a charming little house on a piece of terraced cliff at Sandgate, which I remember for many things and not least for a full-size photograph of George Gissing's handsome head, which hung there. When that fine but gloomy writer came upon evil times, H. G. was one of his best friends.

H. G.'s terrifying story, *The War of the Worlds*, which came out in 1898, prompted Graves and myself to make a light-hearted travesty of it called *The War of the Wenuses*, 'translated from the Artesian of H. G. Pozzuoli'. I used to possess a series of drawings by Wells, who has a very deft pencil, depicting his reception and perusal of this book; but they vanished into smoke in the deplorable bonfire to which I have already referred. Authors are now too seldom burlesqued in book form, and in the comic papers only now and then. But when I was hardly more than a child I used to rejoice in Burnand's perversions of the popular successes of his day—*Strapmore* by Weeder,

Fictor Nogo's *One and Three, What's the Odds* by Jawley Sharp, and the travesty of Colonel Fred Burnaby's *Ride to Khiva*: slender books published at a shilling in shiny white boards with cover-designs by Linley Sambourne. But the spirit that brought them into being seems to have fled, although the vulnerability of authors has not diminished.

In those distant days H. G.'s two sons, one of whom is now an eminent biologist and the other a controller of film work, were small boys. 'Master George Wells', a letter from whom I included in the anthology called *The Second Post*, was the elder. It appears thus, under the general heading of 'Laconics':

*Master George ('Gyp') Wells, after an operation, informs Master Frank Wells of his duty*

DEAR FRANK,—I hope you will not think me selfish, but I am in such great pain that I think you ought to get me a small present.—Your loving GEORGE

Arnold Bennett wrote a fixed number of words a day, just as Trollope had done before him, and you knew when he was doing it. If you stayed with him, whether on sea or shore, he did not emerge until the task was accomplished. There are other writers with as considerable an output who do their work no one knows when. Phillips Oppenheim produces at least three new books a year, as part of a definite arrangement with his publishers, but it would puzzle his friends to say when he does it. I have seen him at various other occupations; I have seen him playing golf, I have seen him gambling, I have seen him sitting long over lunch and dinner, I have seen him dancing; but never have I seen him at work. Nor have I ever heard him mention his work. On the other hand, there are authors who carry their work everywhere, even to dinner-parties, where they would have a much better appetite to do justice to the food if only their hero and heroine, by which I mean the two most flagitious sinners in the new book, were not in such a mess.

But Maurice Baring, who never fails to produce a long novel once a year, also never fails to be ready for every festive proposition that is laid before him. Nor has he the air of an author; there are traces of his early training in diplomacy still upon him, although I suspect him of being throughout life diplomatic for others rather than himself; his conversation is not normally of books, and if it is typical of authors during dinner to balance wine glasses on their heads, I have met very few of the genuine kind. If no one else has called Maurice Baring the divine amateur, I will. Every kind of writing comes naturally to him and he stamps them all with his own distinction.

The preliminary details of my first meeting with Maurice have vanished from an ordinarily good memory. I know it was at lunch at the Café Royal and I know that Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton were also there, but I have no notion which of us was the host. There is, however, a special reason for remembering as much as I do. Belloc is a great singer, and one of his own songs pleading for mercy for sins of which he is not too much ashamed, with a refrain 'Let poor Hilary in', should be on every gramophone; and my special reason for remembering this meal is that he sang all through it. Maurice and he, when at Oxford together, had written a number of poems, satirical or Rabelaisian, and these Belloc sang. To one like myself who has not been to Oxford, and who always prefers the shade to the limelight, this vocalization, in a large crowded room, was, though amusing, disconcerting.

All things, however, come to an end—or so I then thought—and we parted; but there was more to follow, for when, late in the same afternoon, I went to the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street, I was awakened from a peaceful sleep by the notes of a deep Gallic voice; and there again were Belloc and Maurice, recollecting more Macaronics, but this time naked.

'Do you remember an inn, Miranda?  
Do you remember an inn?'

I never see Belloc's name without thinking of these haunting lines.

On another lunching occasion, when Chesterton was beyond doubt my guest, we sat down at one o'clock and were still talking at three when the hall-porter came with a message from a taxi-driver, who would like to know if the gentleman—G. K. C.—would pay him off now as he wanted to eat too.

Maurice Baring, who knows all languages dead and living, has also invented one of his own. It is very simple, consisting of adding 'umble' to the initial consonant or consonants of the word and removing the word's own letters. He even uses the Personal Column of the *Times* in which to communicate with his friends in this code, and once asked me a long and very expensive question there, about a rare book, which I failed to decipher. Money thrown away. For example, wishing to say that Ronnie Knox was staying in Scotland at Laura Lovat's, he would write 'Rumble knumble stumble wumble Lumble Lumble.' This may look like the larger lunacy, but there are those to whom every message thus conveyed is crystal clear. Ronnie Knox is one. It was he who, when everyone else had given it up, decoded 'Mumble mumble mumble' as 'Manners makyth man'.

Among my papers I find the following fiftieth-birthday wishes from Maurice Baring, written at the Front on his faithful, if sometimes inattentive, typewriter, without which he never even crosses the road. Most typewriters lack character, but Maurice's would tell a graphologist all he needed to know.

E. V. LUCAS, BORN 1868

I drink your health, my Dear E. V.,  
In Pomeroy and Burgundy,  
Madeira, claret, Eau de vie,  
And fragrant cidre de Normandie,  
And whisky, beer, and Malvoisie.  
I wish you all felicity,  
Eternal freedom from D.T.

And measles, mumps and housemaid's knee,  
No longings for Felo de Se ;  
Full knowledge of the A B C,  
The Bradshaw and the Rule of Three ;  
Some cheese (fresh Camembert or Brie)  
Some shade beneath an apple-tree  
Or juniper or mulberry ;  
A book of verse by G. K. C.,  
New bread and sugar in your tea,  
And honey straight from Sicily ;  
Long life, good health, prosperity,  
A never ending author's-fee,  
A carriage and an ambling gee,  
A cutter swift to cleave the sea,  
An aeroplane (F E 2 B),  
A picture of the Zuyder Zee,  
A mill upon the river Dee,  
A flask of wine to share with me,  
Your faithful (but inept) M. B.

*June 12, 1918*

The triolet form has a peculiar attraction for this writer ; it is as natural to him to express his thoughts in triolets as it was to Pope to lisp in numbers. I have a large supply to select from, many written from France during the War. Thus, one letter ends :

‘ Yours ever, M. B.  
    (I'm a substantive Major)  
I am honoured, E. V.,  
Yours ever, M. B.  
I have just caught a flea ;  
    It was done for a wager.  
Yours ever, M. B.  
    (I'm a substantive Major).’

Again, in October, 1918 :

‘ Last night we had pheasant,  
    To-day we had grouse,  
What could be more pleasant ?  
Last night we had pheasant.

It was shot by a peasant  
Not far from this house.  
Last night we had pheasant,  
To-day we had grouse.

From the next :

I have just bought two packets  
Of French cigarettes,  
Complete with their jackets.  
I have just bought two packets,  
And four tennis rackets  
With suitable nets.  
I have just bought two packets  
Of French cigarettes.'

And here is a four-lined epigram belonging to the drought of 1918 :

'The Duke of Rutland urged the *Times* to pray  
For rain ; the rain came down the following day.  
The pious marvelled, sceptics murmured ' fluke ',  
And farmers late with hay said " Damn that Duke."'

The last triolet I received accompanied the gift of two pens in December, 1930, after I had expressed the opinion that no nib was ever soft enough :

#### LARGE PEN

I send you a pen  
Or at least what they call one :  
As large as Big Ben.  
I send you a pen.  
I send it, and then  
I send you a small one.  
I send you a pen ;  
Or at least what they call one.

#### SMALL PEN

O self-filling nib,  
I'm afraid you are gritty !  
You write like a squib,  
O self-filling nib !

Manufactured *ad lib*  
By a man in the City,  
O self-filling nib  
I'm afraid you are gritty !

—It is with Small Pen that I write these words.

On the death of Maurice's eldest brother, Lord Revelstoke, he came into a comfortable income. I wrote to say I was glad that he was now blest. He replied, 'It's all yours if you want it,' and I believe it would have been.

In one way the most extraordinary author I know is Ronald Knox, 'the wickedest clerk in Holy Orders', as W. P. Ker described him when he sent me his satire *Absolute and Abitophel* in its original pamphlet form. Ronnie was then an Anglican. Since then he has become a Roman, the steps of the transformation being recorded in his *Spiritual Odyssey*; and he is now Father Knox, but not the less witty for that. His uniqueness as an author, to me, is his power of writing on a type-machine direct. I watched (and heard) two of his satirical novels being written in this way: *Memories of the Future*, 1923, and *Sanctions*, 1924, one at Beaufort Castle in the Highlands and one at Rottingdean, and I was spell-bound.<sup>1</sup>

*Memories of the Future* is one of the most alert and amusing books of our time, and I take an especial interest in it because I am one of the four persons to whom it is dedicated.

To receive the dedication of books is a pleasure that cannot pall, and I have a shelf where no other volumes are allowed to stand. They include Gerald Gould's *All About Women* (the latest), A. P. Herbert's *More Misleading Cases*, D. B. Wyndham Lewis's *On Straw*, 'In memory of the Gardener'—the gardener being the odd peasant-like proprietor of that admirable but not too *soigné* abode of good food in the manner of Brillat-Savarin, the Restaurant du Progrès in the Avenue de Neuilly. The peculiarity of 'the gardener' is that he is always in his shirt-sleeves,

<sup>1</sup> Since the first edition of this book was issued Mr. Baring has informed me (by triolet) that he too composes direct on the machine.



wears a fancy waistcoat and a cloth cap, and, while he is helping his favourite habitués to compose their meal, goes down on one knee.

Other books on this votive shelf are Bertram Dobell's *Sidelights on Charles Lamb*, with a dedicatory sonnet, W. P. James' *Lure of the Map* (half mine and half Ker's), H. B. Irving's *Book of Remarkable Criminals*, John Galsworthy's *A Motley*, Maurice Hewlett's *Halfway House*, J. H. Thorpe's *Cricket Bag*, Chesterton's *G. K. C. as M.C.*, and *The Book of the Onion* by 'Ambrose Heath' that friend of the sound trencherman; while I was also the recipient of Herman Finck's anthology of good tunes: *Melodious Memories*.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SHILLING NONSENSE

Harry Furniss—C. L. Graves—A satirical partnership—*Lives of the 'Lustrious'*—Mock biography—The 'Inside Completuar'—'John Phoenix' found useful—*Wisdom While You Wait*—*Wisdom on the Hire System*—*England Day by Day*—*Change for a Halfpenny*—Napolio—*Signs of the Times*—The *Daily Mail* through the Ages—Henry VIII, Noah, Nero and the Maid—*If*—Cricket under Socialism—The Leonardo wax bust

WHEN that ill-balanced man but very deft draughtsman, Harry Furniss, broke away from *Punch* and started a trivial comic paper of his own, disastrously called *Lika Joko* (Burnand in *Punch* suggested *Hari Kari* as a better title), he appointed Edmund Barnard of the *Globe* as his literary editor, and Barnard invited Graves and me to join him. We provided a weekly column of notes in prose and verse called 'Fair Game'; but owing to the atmosphere of anxiety which filled the office from the first there was not much fun in the work. The venture indeed was soon over, one bolt, which fell at once, being the intimation that no Gallery ticket for the House of Commons was available for the new paper: a serious privation when it is remembered that it was upon his Parliamentary work that Furniss's fame rested. Often this work was brilliant. The first number of *Lika Joko* was made notable by an open letter to Whistler, in Whistler's own manner, by that very gifted amateur journalist and man-about-town, Ponsonby Ogle.

When, on October 26, 1897, the editorial staff met to dine at the Café Royal in honour of Graves, who was leaving the *Globe* to assist St. Loe Strachey with the *Spectator*, I read some verses in his honour, a few of which may be cited here.

The second stanza bears upon his famous *Hawarden Horace* volumes :

When Graves departs, he leaves a gap  
 Of quite unique dimensions,  
 As though a sudden thunderclap  
 Upset our best conventions :  
 For, as geologists who probe,  
 Find earth with rich ore teeming,  
 So, through our trim, compacter *Globe*,  
 Graves, metal-like, ran gleaming.

Besides, when poets are so rare,  
 And satirists are rarer,  
 To fraternize with Flaccus' heir  
 Made journalism fairer ;  
 We treasured e'en the darkest looks  
 That strayed in our direction  
 From him who wrote the brightest books  
 In Deiniol's collection.

He had aversions (who has not ?)  
 Among the *genus homo* ;  
 He did not worship C—t S—t,  
 Nor idolize Silomo ;  
 Yet though in boiling oil or lead,  
 He often wished them seething,  
 He never truly injured  
 The meanest caddie breathing.

The awful part of 'By the Way',  
 The thought to make one solemn,  
 Is this : that whether sad or gay,  
 One must produce a column.  
 And when you think how wearying  
 This sempiternal verve is,  
 It is, indeed, no little thing—  
 Graves' seven years of service.

True, now and then that trick he had  
 (You recollect ?) of punning  
 Made e'en the stoic lino sad,  
 And turned our thoughts to gunning ;

Yet anger always died at this,  
This constituted solace :  
He'd earned the right to go amiss,  
He wrote *The Hawarden Horace*.

The concealed name is that of Clement Scott, for many years dramatic critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, whose peculiar form of rhetoric, heavily charged with sentiment and not altogether proof against suspicion of *parti pris*, was one of the outstanding features of the Press in those days. 'Silomo' was the name which Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, M.P., brought back from Africa, conferred upon him by a native tribe.

It was a great moment in 1908 when Graves gave me a letter written to him by his brother-in-law, Sir Edward Grey, now Lord Grey of Fallodon, which ran: 'I am liking *Listener's Lure* particularly much; so much that I have resolved as soon as I am out of office, not only to read but to buy every book that E. V. Lucas has written, is writing, or shall write.'

Although Graves left the *Globe* we were not to part company as colleagues, for a few years later we began a satirical partnership which led to no fewer than ten volumes of topical nonsense—beginning with *Lives of the 'Lustrious* in 1901, followed by *Wisdom While You Wait*, 1902, *Wisdom on the Hire System*, 1903, *England Day by Day*, 1903, *Change for a Halfpenny*, 1905, *Signs of the Times*, 1906, *Hustled History*, 1907, *If*, 1908, *Farthest from the Truth*, 1909, and *All the Papers*, 1914. That was the last we did together, usually with George Morrow to illustrate and often to inspire. There was also the burlesque of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* in 1898.

The first of the series, *Lives of the 'Lustrious*, took *Who's Who*, then a youthful venture, as its basis, and touched off some of the most prominent personalities of the moment. It is even now, thirty years after, not wholly out of date, so true to type is the English public man. Looking through the book I find that, though most of the victims are dead, quite a number are still with us and have become even more

'lustrious. I quote a few of the biographies, but spare the reader annotation, as too much would be needed.

### SIR EDWARD GREY

GREY, SIR EDWARD, M.P., was born under the sign of Pisces at Walton in 1862, and first felt the rod at Winchester. At Oxford, where he studied the works of Tennyson under Professors Tompkins, George Lambert, and Peter Latham, Sir Edward showed a fine force and on entering the House of Commons in 1885, instinctively took up his stand under the grille. Though fond at times of a long rest Sir Edward Grey has proved himself a hard-working administrator, and on the strength of his vigorous railroad service was recently appointed a Director of the North Eastern. Politically, Sir Edward Grey, in company with Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Henry Fowler, has latterly shown a decided leaning towards the Harris Tweed party, but in earlier days his epitaph was composed by Mr. Gladstone in the following terms : .

Behold our Grey, the dry-fly king  
Whose word the world relies on :  
He never said a foolish thing,  
Nor did he an unwise one.

Authorities : Praed's *Grey Fisherman* ; *The Life of Henry the Fowler* ; Somerville's *The Chase* ; *L'Affaire Dreyfshfus*.

### MR. RUDYARD KIPLING

KIPLING, RUDYARD, Poet Laureate and Recruiting Sergeant, was born all over the world, some eighteen years ago. After a lurid infancy at Westward Ho ! in the company of Stalky & Co., he emigrated to India at the age of six, and swallowed it whole. In the following year the British Empire was placed in his charge, and it is still there. A misgiving that England may have gone too far in the matter of self-esteem having struck him in 1897, he wrote ' The Recessional ', but there are signs that he has since forgotten it. Mr. Kipling is the only young literary man of eminence who has never

• lectured for Major Pond ; but one never knows one's destiny, and the Major still hopes. Meanwhile he lives in Cape Colony, which is a suburb of Rottingdean, and at intervals puts forth a fascinating book, or a moral essay in *The Times*. His stories have a great popularity, and his poems are in the repertory of every volunteer ; but it is by his masterly lyric, ' Pay, pay, pay,' that he holds his place in the great heart of the people, who are still paying and seem likely to continue to do so (*see Hicks-Beach*).

Authorities : *The Wise Men of the East* ; *Annals of the Palace Theatre*.

#### M. MAETERLINCK

MAETERLINCK, MAURICE, Bee-master, was born at St. Ives, in 1862. As a small child he was given Dr. Watt's Hymns to read ; but coming upon the question, ' How doth the little busy bee ? ' he refused to read further until he could find a sufficient answer. Thereupon he removed to Belgium, for no other reason than that it begins with B, and has since pursued the even tenor of an apiarist's life, diversified only by stings. For these M. Maeterlinck uses common blue, and it is while waiting for them to heal that his plays have been written. As a variant upon the trite conventions of the drawing-room drama, M. Maeterlinck has composed a new series of musical tragedies, to be played by marionettes after dark in a coal-hole, to the accompaniment of a B flat drone bass performed on muted celluloid combs. He is also alleged to be engaged on a Biblical pantomime entitled *Huz and Buz*. His motto is : *Honey soit qui mal y pense*.

Authorities : *Lee's Life of Shakespeare* ; information supplied by Messrs. Reckitt, Mr. A. B. Walkley, and Mr. A. Sutro.

#### M. PADEREWSKI

PADEREWSKI, IGNAZ JAN, President of the House of Keys, was born in St. James's Hall, 1890, having previously studied under Sovinski, Roguski, Leschetitzky, and

Prtnkévitshsvntchtchitzky (prononcez Bertrant). His first recital was sparsely attended, but before the end of the season he was obliged to seek police protection from the embarrassing attentions of his admirers. Thanks, however, to the application of the new Orling-Armstrong system of wireless telephony, Sir Edward Bradford is not without hopes that M. Paderewski, who has recently taken to using a Panhard 8 h.p.4.7 q.f. overstrung grand, with pom-pom pedals and Vickers-Maxim resonator, will be rendered fully audible to the naked ear in St. James's Hall without quitting his estate in Galicia, where he is now immersed in agricultural pursuits. It may be added that such is M. Paderewski's capillary attraction, that on one occasion when a chrysanthemum show was being held at the Crystal Palace a short-sighted judge mistook the head of the Polish virtuoso for an exhibit and awarded him an honourable mention. M. Paderewski, who keeps wicket for the Warsaw Eleven in order to harden his hands, plays all composers with impunity, and scores with astonishing rapidity.

Authorities: *Paddy at Home*, by the Baron Mandat-Grancey. Private information supplied by Mr. Eugene Sandow and the St. James's Hall cat.

#### MR. H. G. WELLS

WELLS, H. G., Prophet, was born at Old Moore Park in Hertfordshire, in 1866, and after being duly vaticinated in accordance with the Act, was apprenticed to Zadkiel. Mr. Wells served under this famous soothsayer until 1896, when he became the ally of Captain Coe and Old Joe, his 'snips' showing extraordinary foresight and sagacity. After acquiring a large fortune on the turf by means of his uncommon gifts, Mr. Wells, in order to study other civilizations, made a trip to Mars, and also to the Moon, in the company of M. Santos Dumont, M. Jules Verne, and Sir George Newnes, with what result is well known. On returning, he built himself a house at Sandgate, on an eminence commanding an extensive view of the future, into which he gazes continually,

dreaming of a millennium of middle-class efficiency. In such time as he can spare from casting the horoscopes of the crowned heads of Europe, who are continually visiting him *incog.*, he writes light fiction, or takes short runs into the empyrean on his aeropile. His motto is : 'How happy could I be in aether.'

Authorities : *The Lives of the Prophets, Applied Mechanics, and Anticipations.*

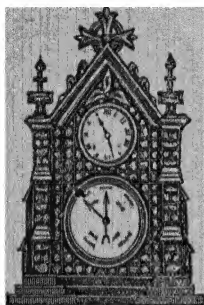
The provocation for *Wisdom While You Wait* was the advertising enterprise of the American Syndicate which had captured the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and meant everybody to buy a set. The first copies were issued privately at the personal cost of W. P. Ker, who insisted on the joke being given a run. That was in 1902. Then when Isbisters saw a copy and asked to be allowed to put it properly on the market, it was extended and published in the ordinary way, in 1903, sold fifty thousand copies and was not without imitations. Indeed the breed is not yet extinct. The idea of illustrating one book by pictures made for others, which was the principal novelty, did not originate with us ; I found it in an old American work of humour by 'John Phoenix', where half a dozen blocks of one ox were ranged in a row to represent a cattle ranch, and so forth. We merely carried it farther.

In the course of the promoters' campaign a number of tempting prizes were offered to winners of competitions, the answers to the questions all having to be found in the pages of the *Encyclopædia*. An ingenious idea not insusceptible to treatment. We therefore prepared a second brochure, *Wisdom on the Hire System*, illustrated by 'Scenes in the Lives of Competitors', drawn chiefly from old numbers of *Good Words*. Some of the plates from both will be found in the present work.

With the next skit, *England Day by Day : A Guide to Efficiency and Prophetic Calendar for 1904*, George Morrow joined and fortified the firm, providing the first of a long series of comic advertisements, many of which might have



Superb Plate from the Article **Luther** in the New Volumes  
of the INSIDECOMPLETUAR BRITANNIAWARE.



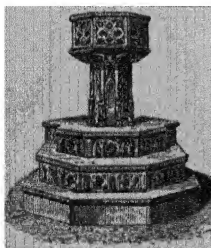
BAROMETER-CLOCK FROM  
LUTHER'S HOUSE



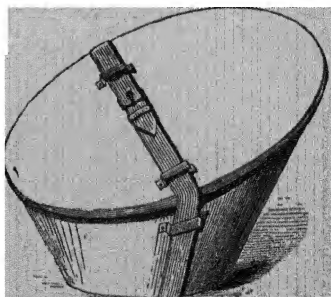
CANDLE LIGHTED BY  
LATIMER AND RIDLEY



THE POPE AS HE  
APPEARED TO LUTHER.

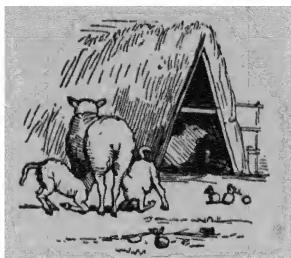


FONT WHERE LUTHER WAS  
CHRISTENED.

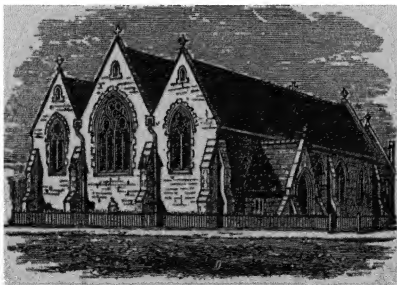


LUTHER'S BATH PACKED FOR TRAVELLING.

Superb Plate from the Article **The Goths** in the New  
Volumes of the INSIDECOMPLETUAR BRITANNIAWARE.



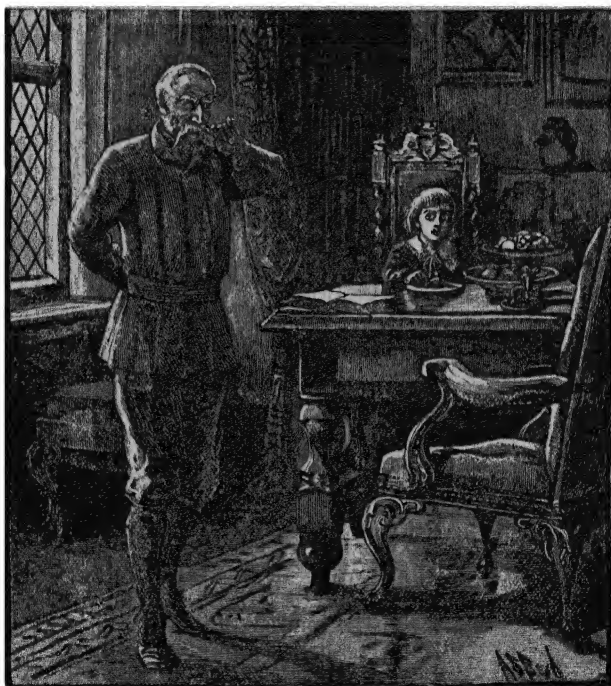
SIMPLE GOTHIC SHELTER FOR SHEEP AND LAMBS.



SUBURBAN GOTHIC CHURCH WITHOUT SPIRE.

*From 'Wisdom While You Wait' (1903)*

## Scenes in the Lives of Competitors.—II.



LORD ROBERTS WINS BEKKER'S ARISTOTLE.

*From 'Wisdom on the Hire System' (1903)*

**Scenes in the Lives of Competitors.—XV.**

**A CONSOLATION PRIZE.'**

*From 'Wisdom on the Hire System' (1903)*

been devised to-day. In fact, on looking again at this series, I have been struck by their evidence as to the immutability of English life. Although the letterpress is out of date, I am tempted to give a second time on earth to the following absurdities :

### IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN

BUFFALO BILL, although sixty years of age, is still waiting to have his hair cut.

MR. WILSON BARRETT did not begin to wear low necks until he weighed thirteen stone.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT did not learn to dance until Lord Rosebery was Premier.

The late POPE LEO XIII never heard of Mr. Hall Caine until he was ninety.

The authors of *The Gourmet's Guide to Europe* had never heard of Lockhart's until their book had gone to press.

MONSIEUR WALKLEY did not quote Aristotle until he was four.

MR. WILLIAM ARCHER did not discover Ibsen until Ibsen was seventy.

SIR THOMAS LIPTON never shook hands with the King until he was forty-four.

MR. ALGERNON ASHTON never saw Kensal Green until he was five.

The EARL OF ROSSLYN did not break the bank until he was two hundred.

M. PADEREWSKI did not use the pianola until he was bald.

LORD SALISBURY, at the close of his political career, nearly succeeded in mastering the names of his colleagues in the Cabinet.

PRINCE RANJITSINHJI still believes that Stonewall Jackson was a cricketer.

And here is some weather lore, very like the real thing :

*For Beekeepers—*

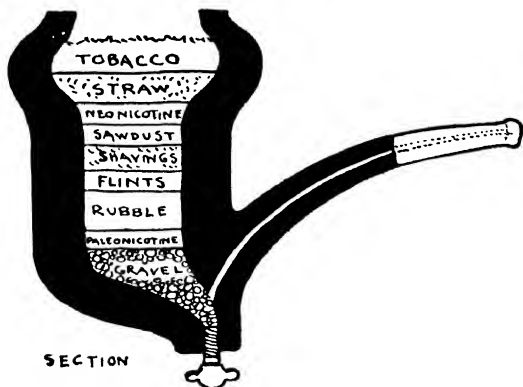
A swarm of bees in August  
Is worth a peck of sawdust.  
A swarm of bees in September  
Is something to remember.

# **NO MORE NICOTINE!**

BY SMOKING CAPTAIN BULGER'S PATENT

## **“HEALTH RESORT” PIPE**

The deleterious effects of Nicotine are wholly removed, and the smoker attains to a great age.



The Pipe is supplied with a series of strata of carefully selected materials, on its way through which the smoke is entirely freed from harmful juices.

**PRICE, TO SMOKERS, 3/9.**

### **TESTIMONIALS.**

LORD KITCHENER writes: "Two whiffs of the 'Health Resort' Pipe have the same effect on a subaltern as the most powerful cigar. I recommend it everywhere in the interests of economy."

SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE: "As a geologist I am fascinated by the stratification of your pipe."

PROFESSOR HUBERT VON HERKOMER, R.A., writes: "Your pipe draws superbly. I am recommending it to all the students at my Art School at Bushey."

*By George Morrow*

*From 'England Day by Day' (1903)*

# THE "CRÆSUS" Trousers Stretcher.

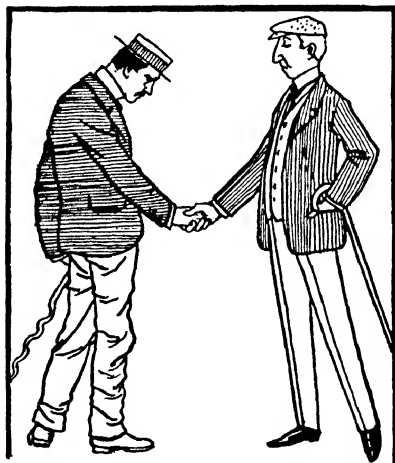
• • •

Easily adjusted. Will make old trousers new and new trousers like Mr. George Alexander's.

May be packed in a hat-box and applied anywhere.

• • •

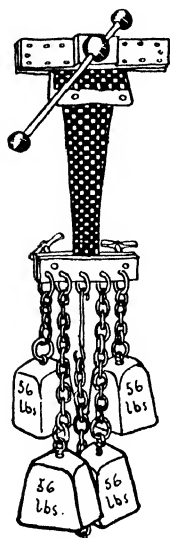
## The Invention of the Century.



"CHEER UP! YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT WHEN  
YOU GET A 'CRÆSUS'."

*By George Morrow*

*From 'England Day by Day' (1903)*



No more  
Corrugated  
Pants.

• • •

Ask for the

"CRÆSUS"

and have legs like  
paper-knives.



**CAN BE USED FOR A  
PULPIT.**

The Rev. ANTI-SEPTIMUS  
FLOCKTENDER writes from The  
Wash : " Cleanliness being next  
to Godliness, I preach from your  
Bath Cabinet every Sunday."

By George Morrow  
From ' England Day by Day ' (1903)

# LEGG'S BATH . . . CABINET.

THE  
" Python."

*A Turkish Bath for  
a Penny in the  
privacy of Home.*

No Rough Shampooers.  
No Tips to Attendants.  
No Chilling Cold Plunges.  
No Byzantine Decorations.

**NOTA BENE.**

The " Python " is so constructed that it can be mistaken for a number of other things, such as a Music Cabinet, a Boot Cupboard, a Writing-desk, a Dog Kennel, a Lean-to, a Cucumber Frame.

**NOBODY NEED KNOW  
THAT YOU WASH.**



A swarm of bees in October  
 Is rare when one is sober.  
 A swarm of bees in November  
 Resembles one in December.

*Birds and the Weather—*

If the corncrake sings in the harvest moon,  
 Your crop isn't worth a macaroon.

If the cuckoo sings on Guy Fawkes' day,  
 There'll be the deuce and all to pay.

If the nightjar sings before the jay,  
 Look out for snow on Swithin's Day.

*For Japan—*

An earthquake in the morning  
 Is the shepherd's warning ;  
 An earthquake at night  
 Is the shepherd's delight.

In *Change for a Halfpenny, being the prospectus of the Napolio Syndicate*, as in most of its successors, the cheap Press was the principal butt, with the late Lord Northcliffe as leading culprit. Hence the word Napolio for the talisman. The idea of the book was to show what would become of the world if the halfpenny papers (as they then were) had their way, and its motto, after Henley, was—

How can I do for thee  
 England, my England ?

Here are three of the Napolio maxims :

To verify means labour at the desk :  
 Impulsiveness is far more picturesque.

Old heads are best, the Obsolete declare,  
 But young assistants have a snapper flair.

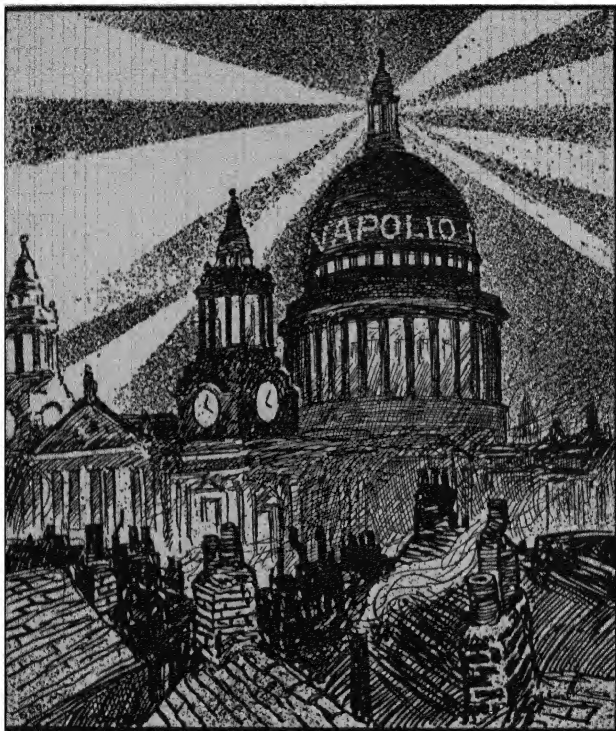
Youth at the helm, and Impulse at the prow,  
 That is the way to boss creation now.



Westminster Abbey after Syndication.

*By George Morrow*

*From 'Change for a Halfpenny' (1903)*



St. Paul's after Syndication.

*By George Morrow*

*From 'Change for a Halfpenny' (1905)*

In *Signs of the Times, or The Hustler's Almanack*, Mr. Hooper and his Encyclopaedia were again in the forefront. It is chiefly old game now, and too many of the people involved are dead ; but there are a few indomitables. Thus, Mr. Shaw respected Self-denial Week by being photographed ' with his clothes on '.

*Hustled History*, which followed, in 1907, was more constructive in its satire. Significant events in the history of the world were shown as they might have been treated by the Press, not of their own time, for there was none, but of ours. Again the *Daily Mail* was our principal butt. I give in full Episode X, dealing with Henry VIII and his marriage with Catherine of Aragon :

### THE ROYAL BETROTHAL

(From the *Daily Mail*, June 16th, 1509)

' Spanish and Norman and Dane are we,' sings the bard, but assuredly we are ' all of us Spain ' in our welcome to the noble lady whom his Gracious Majesty has chosen to be his bride. Apart from the romantic circumstances of her previous marriage, Princess Catherine is not only an amiable, accomplished, and attractive woman, but she is of the bluest blood in Europe. The land of the *Capo y espada* has always appealed with peculiar force to all adventurous Englishmen ; the Alhambra is a household word to all Londoners, and all lovers of the national pastime of Spain have a warm corner in their hearts for ' John Bull '. We are convinced as we can be of anything in this world of surprises that this new dynastic alliance will link the two nations in the bonds of imperishable amity.

### EVERY OUNCE A KING

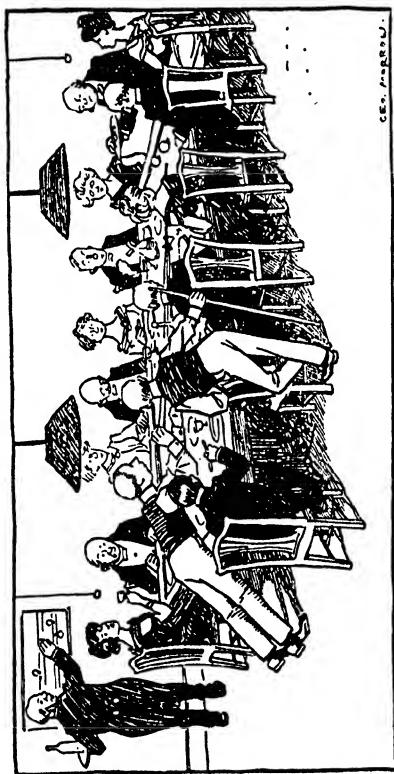
A CHARACTER STUDY OF HENRY VIII

*By Sally A. Tooley*

Of middle height but splendidly proportioned, and of vast muscular strength, his nobly chiselled features framed in an

# COMBINED DINING & BILLIARD TABLE.

Makes Billiards more interesting and Dinners more Exciting.



MR. JOHN ROBERTS writes: "It makes a new game of it."

MR. H. W. STEVENSON writes: "My biggest break so far has been 19—1 Epergne, 8 Tumblers, and 10 Wine Glasses."

LORD KELVIN writes: "We never have dull evenings now."

**AT ALL FURNISHERS. PRICE LIST ON APPLICATION.**

*By George Morrow*

*From 'Signs of the Times' (1907)*

aureole of auburn curls, King Henry VIII not only looks but is

Every Ounce A King.

His rippling laughter is contagious and his face is continually wreathed in smiles. But the King's title to eminence is not based merely on his physical beauty, his florid complexion or his genial disposition. He is by general consent the first athlete within the four seas, and Signor Guistiniani has left it on record that it is the prettiest thing in the world to see him play tennis. On one occasion when he was annoyed with Cardinal Wolsey he suddenly seized him by the sinister leg and hurled him down the palace stairs to the no small surprise of that eminent cleric. Then he is not only a great scholar but a great linguist, speaking five European languages fluently and being able

#### TO SWEAR IN ESPERANTO.

He is a very successful amateur photographer, and occasionally sketches. He is not only proficient on the viol da gamba, the virginals and the sackbut, but he is perhaps the greatest composer of this or any other age, unless we except St. Edward the Elgar, to whose works, especially the momentous march 'Pomp and Circumstance', King Henry is particularly addicted. He is also deeply religious, and a very early riser—invariably devoting three hours to his correspondence before breakfasting at 8 a.m.—and the Queen always prepares his coffee for him with

#### HER OWN FAIRY FINGERS

King Henry's worst enemy, if he has one, could not accuse him of being a misogynist. Indeed, his impartial devotion to the fair sex is one of the most touching traits in the character of this Royal and Admirable Crichton. At the same time he is no admirer of the advanced or enlightened woman. Indeed, he has laid down the dictum that the truly clever woman attends to her looks, and cultivates charm, and has been known to question whether a woman who writes can remain attractive. His six meals a day are always of the simplest character, and to their regularity—and simplicity—he attributes his clear head and immunity from influenza.

## THE ROYAL DIVORCE

(From the *Daily Mail*, in 1532)

After twenty years of superhuman forbearance our gracious Sovereign has at last taken the step dictated at once by the purest patriotism and the tenderest personal feelings. Released from the Spanish incubus and the terrible menace of a disputed succession, England once more breathes freely. With that unerring judgement which has always characterized him, the King now presents to his adoring people an English bride, winsome as a Midsummer's Day, and—if report speaks truly—as brainy as she is beautiful. Queen Anne's popularity is a foregone conclusion. As lady-in-waiting to her predecessor she won golden opinions by the tact and tenacity with which she played a waiting game. Her name is already immortalized by our warm-hearted compatriots across St. George's Channel in the refrain of their famous song 'Lillibullero Bullen-a-la'. Speaking for a million readers we offer her the homage of the best heads and the warmest hearts in England.

## LA REINE EST MORTE

VIVE LA REINE !

(From the *Daily Mail*, May 20th, 1536.)

It would be affectation in us to pretend that the national rejoicings of yesterday were in any way clouded by the event of the day preceding. The King has acted, as he always does, from the noblest motives, and in terminating the miserable existence of Anne Bullen the day before his marriage with Jane Seymour, he mercifully spared her the crowning humiliation of living to witness the triumph of her honoured rival and successor.

## THE NEW QUEEN

(From the *Daily Mail*, January 1st, 1540)

'Saxon and Norman and Dane are we', sings the poet, and we are all of us Saxon in our welcome of the gracious Princess of Cleves, the fair *châtelaine* of Schwanenburg. Our only regret, if we may dare to be so frank, is that the King did not make this happy choice in 1536 or even in 1532. It

is pleasant to think that Queen Anne, as we must learn to call her, will speedily obliterate the unhappy associations connected with her name.

## THE KING'S PLEASANTRY

(From *The Dais*)

We have the best authority for quoting a witty saying of his Majesty's on the occasion of the arrival of the ill-fated Princess Anne of Cleves last year. This Lady, it may not be generally known, was less beautiful in features than possibly in mind and nature, although a portrait of dazzling charm had by some means preceded her by way of credentials. His Majesty, ever an instantaneous judge of the points of a woman, was visibly disconcerted by the disparity between the Princess and her *Carte de visite*. A courtier sending later to inquire how he found her, he remarked without a moment's hesitation that she reminded him of a Flanders mare. Few even professional wits could have been quicker or more genuinely humorous, and, needless to say, the whole Court laughed heartily, joined by the King himself. The Princess, however, with unfortunate tactlessness, remained silent and abashed. It has since transpired that the photograph which purported to be hers was in reality that of a famous Netherlandish actress. So far from its being genuine, on the last occasion that Anne of Cleves herself faced the camera, she broke it.

## THE ROYAL WEDDING

(From the *Daily Mail*, August 8th, 1540)

There is something inexpressibly touching in the way in which our heroic Sovereign sacrifices his personal predilections to the interests of the State. His chivalrous hopes have been shipwrecked by the atrocious conduct of his late unmentionable consort, and yet, with that unconquerable sense of duty which is his strongest characteristic, he manfully shoulders the White King's burden, and once more plunges into the matrimonial maelstrom. As our great Imperialist poet, Kipling, says in an imperishable couplet :

Never the lotus closes, never the wild-fowl wake,  
But our bluff King Hal proposes another wife to take.'



Queen Catherine comes of the best English stock, and is connected with the noblest families in the land. In the soul-shaking words of Burke: 'The ducal and illustrious Howards stand, next to the Blood Royal, at the head of the Peerage of England.' Though we live in a democratic age and under a constitutional monarchy, without blue blood Britain can never be mistress of blue water.

### THE ROYAL WEDDING

(From the *Daily Mail* of July 12th, 1543)

The name Catherine is fraught with painful associations in Court circles among all whose memories can carry them back to February 13th of last year, when the despicable Howard expiated her myriad iniquities towards her long-suffering and saint-like spouse. For this reason, doubly welcome is a new Queen of stainless scutcheon and impeccable conduct who comes to rehabilitate this sadly tarnished praenomen, and the ceremony to be solemnized to-day will awaken a sympathetic chord in the heart of every chivalrous Englishman. Again, the surname Parr is a household word to millions of Englishmen, and is fraught with the happiest suggestion of longevity, which we sincerely hope may be realized in the case of the new Queen. Handsome, accomplished, and an excellent nurse, Miss Parr is also credited with a limitless stock of patience. Once more we congratulate His Gracious Majesty on his unerring judgement in the choice of a consort and helpmate.

### LE ROI EST MORT

### VIVE LE ROI!

(From the *Daily Mail*, January 29th, 1547)

With the long and passionately-desired demise of the perjured polygamist under whose iron heel we have groaned for nearly forty years England breathes again. We hate kicking a dead lion, but the accumulated enormities of this royal and ancient Brigham Young have been enough to sicken a scavenger. With him sensualism masqueraded as chivalry, and private interest as patriotism. Ferocious in temper as he was repulsive in physique, he shed the best blood in Eng-

land to gratify the whim of the moment, and goes down to his grave unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Having fearlessly discharged the noisome but necessary duty of candid criticism, we can now turn to the agreeable task of welcoming our new Sovereign, not the least of whose innumerable merits is the fact that he is not yet of marriageable age.

From other Episodes in *Hustled History*, dealing with the Ark, with Nero, and with Joan of Arc, I make quotations. Here are passages from Episode I, *The Flood*:

### CIVILIZATION TO GO ON

#### NOAH'S HUMANE PLANS

Interviewed yesterday by our special correspondent at Damascus, Noah said that he could not for a moment entertain the proposal recently made in the *Daily Mail*, but he had decided in the interests of civilization to stretch a point here and there and to add certain essential animals to those already arranged for in the ark, viz., two Harmsworths, two Pearsons, two photographers and two linotypes. This decision has created the liveliest satisfaction in journalistic circles.

### AT THE SIGN OF THE ARK

*By Andrew Lang*

An arkaeological correspondent asks me for information about an old chanty in which a midshipman finds three cobras concealed in his ditty-box. I do not know the chanty, but it is evidently a perversion of an old *fabliau* by Guillem de Cabestanh, hence the reference to Capstan Bill. I suppose there is a capstan on the Ark, but my ignorance of nautical matters might extend from here to Mesopotamy.

If my quotation is incorrect, Mesopotamians, who have with Noah sailed, need not write to me from all quarters of the compass to castigate my inaccuracy. *Non semper arcum tendit Apollo*. I prefer blue china to yellow journals, totems to motors, and a *jongleur* to John Burns.

I seldom see a newspaper now, and when I do I feel like an archbishop at Maxim's. Who on earth is Harfold Begbie?

### ALL RECORDS BROKEN

THE ARK REACHES ARARAT AT LAST  
SLOWEST PASSAGE EXTANT

(From our Special Correspondent)

*Ararat.* Monday, 4 p.m.  
Ark arrived safe.

10 p.m. From a brief interview with the skipper I gather that the voyage was marked by no untoward incidents beyond a mutiny among the smaller felidae, which was promptly quelled by Jamrach. A week before land was sighted the two Clarence Rooks escaped through an Oriel porthole and have not been heard of since. During the last month the venerable Commodore remained on the bridge night and day, and has sensibly aged since I last saw him. The behaviour of his family was on the whole admirable. Ham was in great request as a burnt-cork minstrel at the fo'c'sle sing-songs, and Shem created considerable amusement by always wearing an enormous gold chain and three sou'westers even in the hottest weather. In conclusion, I may state that the 'Ark' triumphantly vindicated her claim to be considered the Tortoise of the Tigris Valley, her log showing an average speed for the entire voyage of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  knots per diem. The daily sweepstake was won seventeen times by Zambra, Noah's fifth son, which gave rise to a certain amount of unpleasantness. Otherwise a spirit of perfect *camaraderie* pervaded the entire crew.

### EPISODE VI

ROME UNDER NERO

DEATH OF AGRIPPINA

(From the *Acta Diurna*, 58 A.D.)

(Official)

AGRIPPINA died suddenly yesterday. The Court will go into mourning for twenty-four hours.

There seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of this

announcement, which will be hailed with universal relief throughout the length and breadth of the Empire. All hearts will go out in sympathy towards the Imperial orphan in his auspicious bereavement, and we feel sure that we are only voicing the sentiment of all loyal Romans when we express the pious hope that he will be enabled to endure his felicity with fortitude.

### COURT AND SOCIETY

MESSALINA'S was as usual crowded last night, and the *recherchés* triclinia in the Peacock Salon were packed with rank, fashion and genius. Publicus Biberius Mero had a brilliant little party of patricians all of whom wore what has now become to be known as the 'Maximum' face (*Os Maximum*)—an expression which Sargentius has caught so admirably in his last portrait of Poppaea. Considerable resentment was caused during the evening by the sudden reappearance of a well-known pro-consul who was reported to have committed suicide last week in disgust at his huge loss of appetite. His unexpected resurrection caused the keenest dismay to his wife, who was supping at a neighbouring table. Owing, however, to the tactful intervention of the manager, nothing was spilled but a Jeroboam of Falernian.

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Many well-known faces were entertaining at the Palatine last night. Amongst others I noticed Philippus Ardens Ionius.

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At the Miles Gloriosus last night Bernardus Shavius entertained a select party of green-meaters, including Gulielmus Sagittarius, Arturus B. Ambulator, Granvillius Latrator, and Herbertus Puteolanus. The *pièce de résistance* on a menu which taxed the resources of the Milesian cuisine to the utmost was a purée of *fabae salientes*, with caper sauce, of which the host ate immoderately, talking all the time.

### RAMBLING REMARKS

The annual dinner of the Catacombs Club on Friday last was a great success. My old friend, Silvestrius Ornus, made a most genial chairman, but the hero of the evening was undoubtedly the veteran Pagina Saltator, who proposed the

health of the guest of the evening, Clemens Brevior, in a speech of exceptional eloquence. The ventilation of the Catacombs Club still leaves something to be desired, but the cuisine has greatly improved, while the high moral tone and unaffected piety of the members—all of whom appeared in full evening dress—sets a lofty and much-needed example in this decadent and luxurious age.

HOMO CANTIUS

### THEATRICAL GOSSIP

Consternation reigns in dramatic circles over the refusal of the Censor to license Granvillius Latrator's new play 'Frugalitas'. The objection raised by this wise official is to the dangerous and retrograde lessons of economy and temperance—if not actual asceticism—which the drama inculcates.

Immediately upon the news of the refusal of a licence to Granvillius Latrator's 'Frugalitas' comes tidings of a similar rebuff which has just been suffered by the author of a new romantic play entitled 'Pius Aeneas'. This play our excellent and sagacious Censor—and very rightly, too, we think—objects to on the ground that the modern Roman stage is no place for the exhibition of displays of filial tenderness.

There is naturally ferment among the friends of both the censured dramatists, for the pastime of making martyrs has ever been popular, and the plays, we hear, are to be performed in private.

But enough of this tiresome matter. More to the point is it to think of the continued success, artistic as well as financial, of those delightful works, 'Cuculus' and 'Matri-cida' at the Loyalty. Both are nearing their second hundredth night.

### THE BURNING OF ROME

#### HOW IT BEGAN

(From the *Orbis Terrarum* of July 20th, 64)

The great fire of Rome, which is still raging while I write, must unhesitatingly be pronounced the most brilliant and satisfying spectacle ever provided for the populace by our

Imperial *impresario*. It is true that there has been some considerable loss of life in the cheaply built tenement houses in the poorer quarters of the city, but in comparison with the results achieved the cost has been quite negligible. The idea of having a fire as a means of educating the defective aesthetic sense of the masses emanated solely from the brain of the Emperor. It was at Poppaea's garden-party that it occurred to him, and it must never be forgotten that the distinguished honour of being chosen as the human torch to inaugurate the conflagration fell to the lot of Claudius Clerus, in this as in all else the most successful Christian of our generation.

#### MUSICAL GOSSIP

The Emperor, as is now generally known, occupied himself during the recent conflagration in the performance of a series of violin solos, and those who were privileged to hear him say that never before were the executive powers of the Imperial *virtuoso* more richly displayed. One interesting result has been a respectful request that his Majesty would perform at the Queen's Hall so that his affectionate subjects might have an opportunity of hearing him at, so to speak, the top of his form—a favour which, we understand, he would grant but for one drawback—namely, that he feels, not unnaturally after such an artistic success, that he must have the inspiration of fire. Steps are accordingly now in progress to ensure a serious outbreak in the neighbourhood of the Queen's Hall on the day in question. Every lover of music must hope that no hitch will occur. The only difficulty at present is the reluctance of certain unpatriotic landlords, the last of whom, however, is under orders to open his veins by to-morrow noon.

#### NERO AS EXECUTANT

*By Mischa Elman*

It is a remarkable fact, and one which constitutes a powerful argument in favour of the monarchical system, that there has never been a bad Royal violinist, at least there is no journalistic evidence extant to that effect. This being so, I can well believe that Nero, if not exactly on the plane of Paganini, Joachim, or Sarasate, was at least a fine per-

former of the old school. He certainly played with fire and brought down many houses, while in the care which he bestowed on the arrangement of his *chevelure* he yielded to no other *virtuoso* of the violin. Again he always commanded attention, and was listened to in perfect silence. Taking all the circumstances into account, I have no compunction in affirming that Nero was the most conspicuous fiddler of his time.

If he had devoted himself entirely to the instrument, instead of paying a divided allegiance to art and politics, I believe that he might have become a formidable rival to Vecsey and Vivien Chartres.

## EPISODE VIII

### THE BURNING OF JOAN OF ARC

#### THE NEW HEROINE

(From the *Daily Mail*, May 7th, 1929)

The brilliant achievement of Mlle. Jeanne D'Arc, now generally known as the Maid of Orleans, is one of the most remarkable instances of female heroism in modern times. From the interesting despatch which our own correspondent with Earl Talbot sends this morning, it is clear that she is a young lady of a dainty and winsome personality. The sympathetic thrill which her exploit has aroused in all chivalrous British hearts will do more to promote an *entente cordiale* with our hereditary foes than anything which has happened since the issue of the continental edition of the *Daily Mail*. We frankly own that her assumption of the masculine garb is calculated to wound the fastidious minds of our readers ; but great causes call for strong measures.

## ROUND THE TOWN

### *By the Dwarf of Blood*

There is a good deal of talk about Rouen just now, owing to the escapades of the Orleans flapper ; but for my part it is a city whose interest begins and ends with its ducks, which reminds me that I had an excellent *caneton à la presse* at Minim's last week-end on a flying visit to Paris. Minim's, by the way, is going stronger than ever, the place at night

being one solid mass of gay cavaliers and pretty ladies. I am told that noble shares are already at five nobles, which is good news to those of us who were fortunate enough to get in on the ground floor.

## THE BURNING OF THE MAID

*By Bart Kennedy*

(Having been at considerable expense in sending Mr. Kennedy to Rouen to act as our special correspondent, we naturally are reluctant to suppress his communication, and therefore, on the principle of giving all sides a hearing, we print it; but we cannot refrain from the opinion that he has bit the hand that fed him—and will feed him no more.—ED. *Daily Mail*.)

The market square of Rouen.

Thousands of people. Princes and peasants and soldiers.

In the centre a pile of—what? Faggots.

In the centre of the faggots—what? A stake.

Tied to the stake—what? A woman. O my brothers, a woman. A living, breathing woman, young, beautiful, brave, the saviour of her country, a seer of visions, a hearer of voices. In one word, Joan of Arc.

Fire!

Is there a more terrible thing in the world than fire? How it rages, screams, fights, blusters, yells, writhes, struggles.

Yes, there is a more terrible thing in the world than fire. Human vengeance and ingratitude.

That is the most terrible thing of all—the black ingratitude of man towards his protectors, the eagerness with which his ears open to slander and obscene hints, his readiness to be revenged.

That is the worst thing in the world, and the great square of Rouen is full of it.

Happy Joan to be leaving such a world!

Great heart, farewell!

BART KENNEDY

## AN EXEMPLARY EXECUTION

(From the *Daily Mail*, June 4th, 1431)

We do not wish to wage war on the dead, but candour forbids us to express the slightest regret for the awful fate



which has befallen the notorious and misguided Maid of Orleans. Public characters have their duties as well as their privileges, and the gross discourtesy which she showed to the British Press, her utter inability to keep in touch with the best spirit of her age, and her gross superstition combined to precipitate her downfall. The procedure adopted at her trial may possibly surprise those accustomed to the less sensational methods of our British courts, but no sane person can cavil at the result. We own that there was a brief moment in which we hoped for better things from Mlle. D'Arc, but our hopes were soon dispelled and recent events have proved her to be no better than a shrieking suffragette. One plea, however, may be fairly urged on her behalf. The poor creature could neither read nor write, and was thus denied the enlightenment and solace furnished to millions of her sisters by our continental and overseas editions.

The title of the next of the series, *If: A Nightmare in the Conditional Mood*, sufficiently explains its scope. Under the heading 'If every man were his own Laureate' I find Mr. Shaw, who makes constant appearances in all these books, writing thus :

'A rebel open and confessed  
Against all regular authority,  
I fear not death ; yet how detest  
The thought of joining a majority.'

King Edward VII, the Kaiser and King Leopold of Belgium have each a page under the heading 'If Monarchs advertized', King Leopold's taking a very sinister turn :

CONGO RUBBER WORKS NEW HANDS WANTED
---

'If the King's Speech were drafted by Mr. Henry James' was a profitable caption, while there is a picture of a bewildered terminus entitled 'If Henry James edited Bradshaw'.

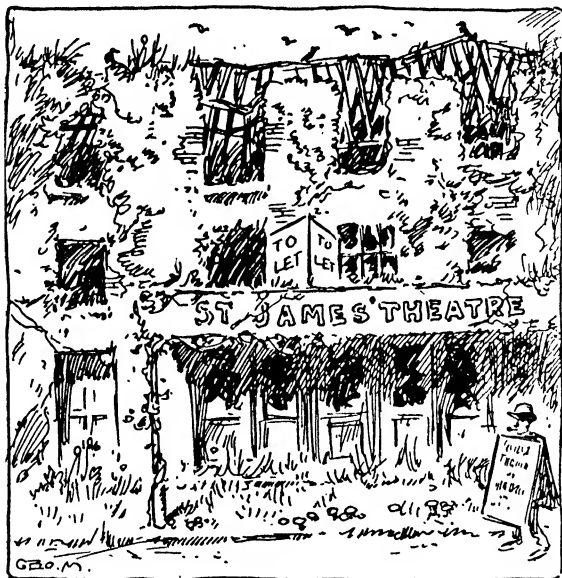
*If Mr. Sargent had taken part in the Exodus*



By George Morrow  
From 'If' (1908)

Among the 'unthinkables' is this. 'If Mr. Somerset Maugham was really industrious,' a supposition still not without gravity, for he, twenty and more years later, advances from novel to novel and play to play with increas-

***If George Alexander's Trousers bagged at  
the Knee***



By George Morrow

From 'If' (1908)

ing purpose and excellence. But where we were really prophetic was in the account of a match between Middlesex and Yorkshire as played 'If Socialism affected Cricket', for from time to time, in a mistaken effort to brighten a game that needs nothing so little as brightening, the papers are still recommending something very like our dreary vision :

## IF SOCIALISM AFFECTED CRICKET

YORKSHIRE v. MIDDLESEX

This match, the first under Socialistic rules, was finished yesterday on the Marylebone ground, which, since its old name, Lord's, has given so much offence, is henceforward to be known as Commoner's. Middlesex won the toss, leading off as usual with Warner and Mr. Tarrant, but the drawbacks, at any rate so far as the spectacular character of the game is considered, of the new Socialistic régime were very

*If everything were known**By George Morrow**From 'If' (1908)*

soon apparent, for Warner, who was batting with superb freedom, had to retire on completing twenty runs, that being the maximum which Mr. Keir Hardie and his colleagues permit. Bosanquet reached his figures with five hits from the first over from Mr. Rhodes, and a riot very nearly followed his compulsory return to the pavilion. The whole side were out for 167, only four wickets having legitimately fallen.

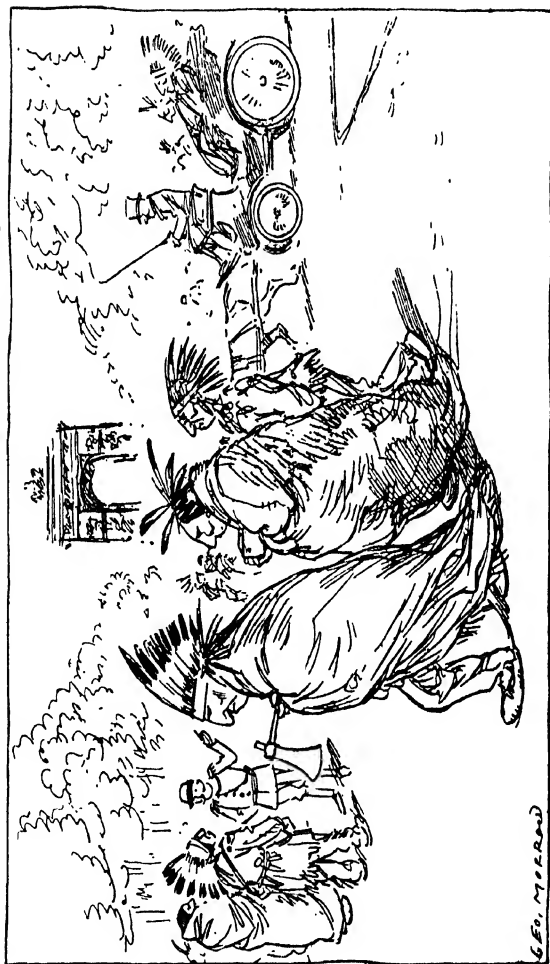
Yorkshire replied with 226 ; being the maximum total, with six extras added. Mr. Hardisty and Mr. Denton were both caught by Mr. Trott without scoring, but as two batsmen had already been dismissed by the same hand, they claimed the right to continue their innings, each reaching

*If Poetry Paid*



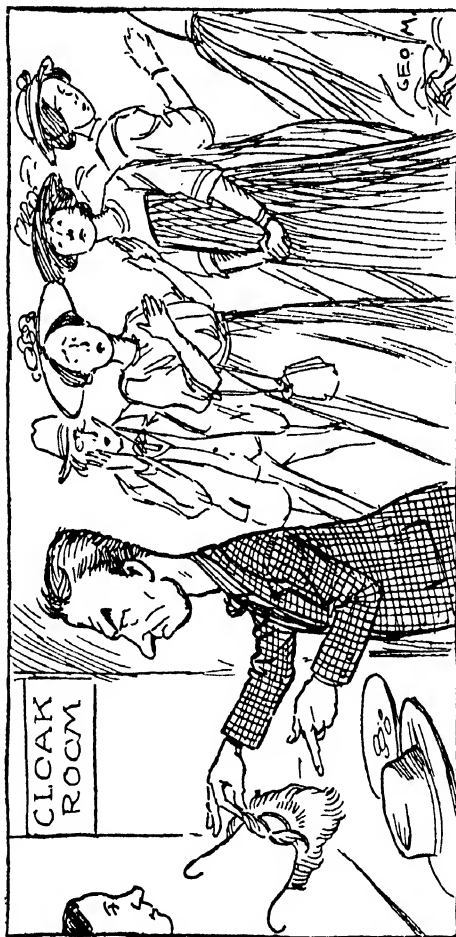
*By George Morrow  
From 'If' (1908)*

*If Columbus had Never Seen an Egg*



By George Morrow  
From 'If' (1908)

*If Bernard Shaw gave up his Beard*



*By George Morrow*

*From 'If' (1908)*

the maximum. On Middlesex going in again, Mr. Hirst speedily disposed of Mr. Tarrant and Warner, but was at once taken off, no bowler under the new rules being allowed to take more than six wickets in a match. Matters now went badly for Yorkshire, every Middlesex batsman except Page reaching the permissible total, a fact due largely to the circumstance that Mr. Haigh had the misfortune to bowl the maximum number of no-balls in his first over and was therefore disqualified from continuing. By this time all interest in the match, as it was called, had evaporated, and the remainder of the game (so to speak) was watched only by the sparrows, the pavilion cat, and four policemen, both umpires having reached their allotted number of decisions and gone home, and the scorers and reporters being equally at the end of their allotted tether. What the end of the match was we are therefore unable to inform our readers.

In *Farthest from the Truth : A Series of Dashes*, we found the Leonardo wax bust very useful. Under the title 'The Dash for the German Dibs' the story was thus told :

#### ACT I

Discovery by Mr. Bister, the famous picture-dealer, in an obscure sale-room, of the wax bust of an amiable young woman, which he at once perceives to be a work of extraordinary genius, probably by Phidias.

#### ACT II

Visit of the expert of *The Blunderer* to Mr. Bister's shop, the result being a three-column article in *The Blunderer* on the amazing discovery that a wax figure of Cleopatra by Praxiteles has come to light.

#### ACT III

The wax figure by Praxiteles is offered by Mr. Bister to the British Museum, the South Kensington Museum, and to Lord Howard de Walden, all of whom refuse it, on account of the Budget.

#### ACT IV

Arrival of Dr. Bode, accelerated by news of the Praxiteles. Immediately on seeing it, he perceives its genuineness, so at



## ACT X

Publication of photographs of Flora Gay side by side with the Praxiteles in the *Spherical London Graphic*. Increased fury of the German Press, which marvels that people can be so susceptible to proofs. The Kaiser orders four more *Dreadnoughts*. Dr. Bode leaves Florence for the fastnesses of the Apennines.

## ACT XI

Mr. Konody, of the *Daily Trail*, interviews aged assistants of Truefitt's, who remember the figure. One of them distinctly recollects dressing its hair in five different fashions in 1854.

## ACT XII

Further letter from Pearysey, stating that he has had another interview with the centenarian, Mr. Mussel Leekie, who remembers that his father was in the habit of building up his wax figures on cast-off garments of his own. Mr. Pearysey dares Dr. Bode to open the Praxiteles.

## ACT XIII

Solemn opening of the Praxiteles at the Royal Museum, Berlin, in the presence of the Kaiser, Dr. Bode, Professor Knackfuss, and representatives of the German Press, Army and Navy. Sensational discovery of a pair of early Victorian trousers embedded in its midst.

## ACT XIV

Leading article in all the German papers satisfactorily demonstrating that the trousers belonged to Praxiteles.

## ACT XV

Kaiser lays down four more *Dreadnoughts*. Launching of the 'Davincible' at Southampton.

## ACT XVI, &amp;c.

?

There it ended ; but I have heard the suggestion put forward that but for the 'Flora' incident there might have been no War.

*The Dash for Defence*



**MR. CHESTERTON BECOMES A BOY SCOUT**

*By George Morrow*

*From 'Farthest from the Truth' (1909)*

The real story of the very beautiful debatable figure, which is now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, is that it was once in the possession of an English sculptor named Richard Cockle Lucas and that a piece of some modern fabric was found inside it ; but whether Lucas (who was not of my line) moulded it, or merely restored it, is an open question. Herr Von Bode believed it to be a genuine Renaissance product, probably by Leonardo himself. When we wrote our nonsense I had not seen the Flora. Since then I have seen it several times and each time with a greater leaning to the Bode theory.

*Farthest from the Truth* was the last of the series in which Graves collaborated, but in 1911 George Morrow and I hit upon the device of forcing the blocks in a stores catalogue to illustrate a biography, and produced *What a Life!* several pages of which, relating a detective story, will be found at the end of this chapter. We applied first to Harrod's for permission and, being refused, went to Whiteley's and were made welcome. The next thing was to get scissors and paste and let ourselves go ; and the process of bending the material to our will was, I can assure you, very exhilarating.

The book had very little popularity, but it won a few very faithful friends, and I know one house where a copy of it is chained to the side of the mantelpiece like a Bible in church.

A year or so ago it formed the basis of a lantern lecture at the Grafton Theatre, the arranged fee for which has not yet been paid.

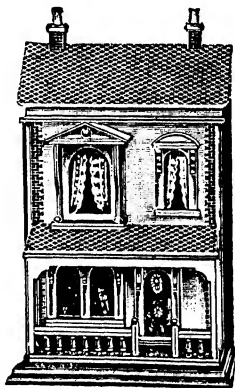
It would be amusing to give the joke a second chance, but the illustrated shilling book is dead, killed by the rise in the prices of production which set in during the War ; and to ask more than a shilling would be foolish. Even Mr. Chesterton's volume of essays boldly and invitingly entitled, in 1916, *A Shilling for My Thoughts*, now costs a florin : a circumstance which never fails to set his vast chuckling installation in motion.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

ONE of the most interesting occurrences of my crowded life was my participation in the famous Closure Castle jewel robbery.

I was staying with Lord Bunderbournce. His old Jacobean mansion embowered in trees was an ideal spot for a daring burglary.



*From 'What a Life! An Autobiography'*

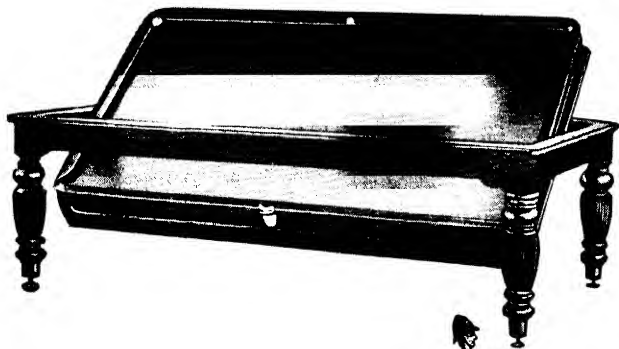
*Illustrated by Whiteley's*

## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

It was, I remember, mid-winter. The fountain was frozen.



We had just finished dinner

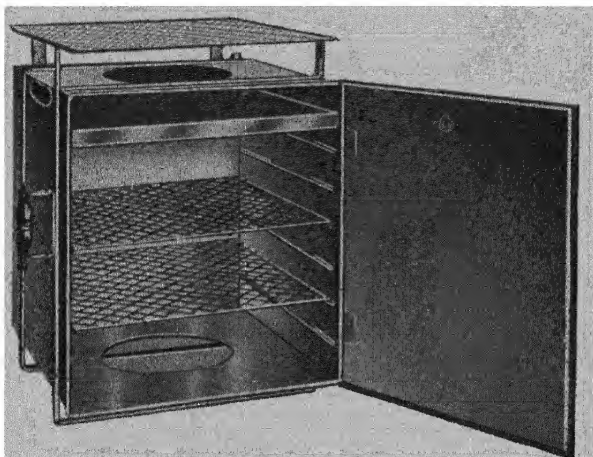


when the local constable burst in to say that a convict had escaped from the neighbouring prison.

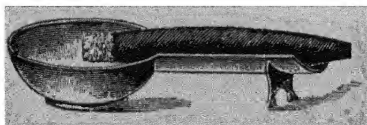


## WHAT A LIFE !

It was too true. The safe was empty.



Our cigars were forgotten in the excitement of the moment.



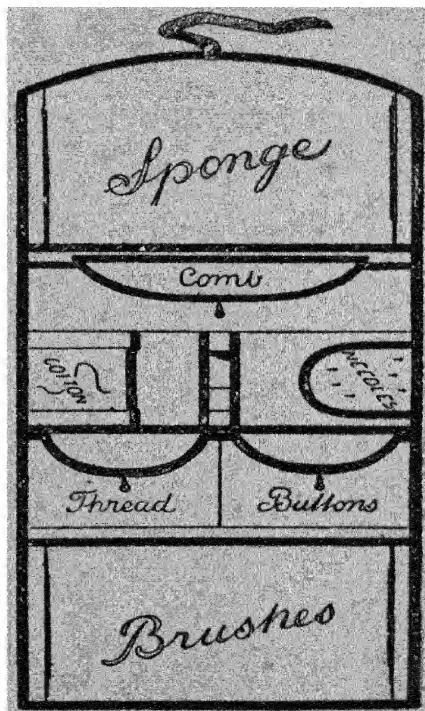
## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

A detective was telephoned for, and came at once.



## WHAT A LIFE !

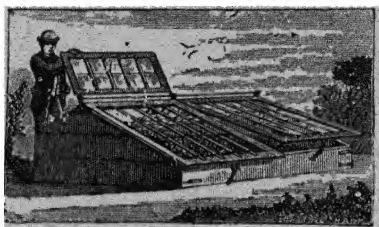
He first made a plan of the house,



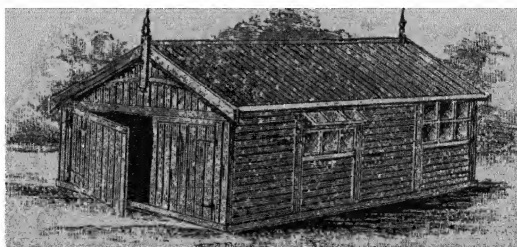


## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

and hurried next to the kitchen garden, where he stood aghast at his discovery.

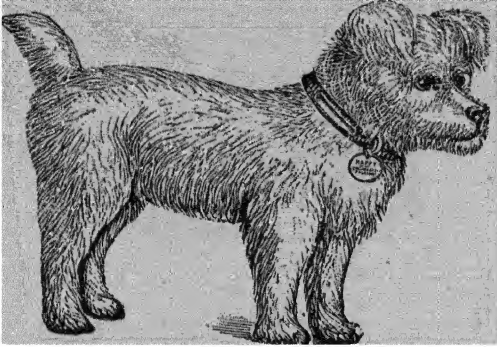


Then on to the out-houses, where it was noticed that one of the doors was partly open.

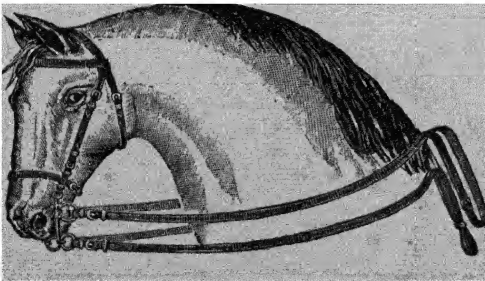


## WHAT A LIFE !

Ponto, the watch dog, seemed dazed. He had been drugged, the detective said.

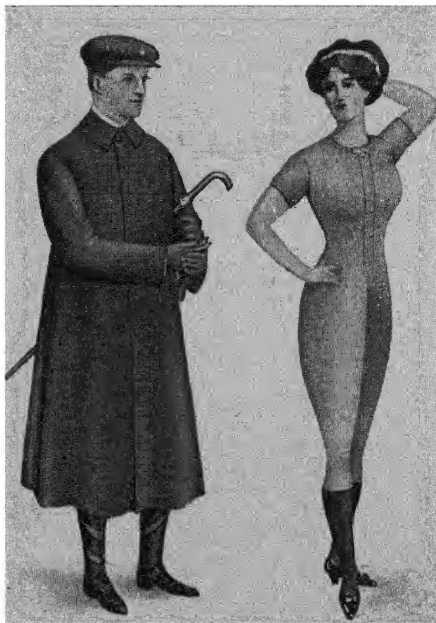


He also pointed out that the horse's neck was strangely swollen.



## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

The detective next interrogated the whole house party, although some were in *dés-habille*.



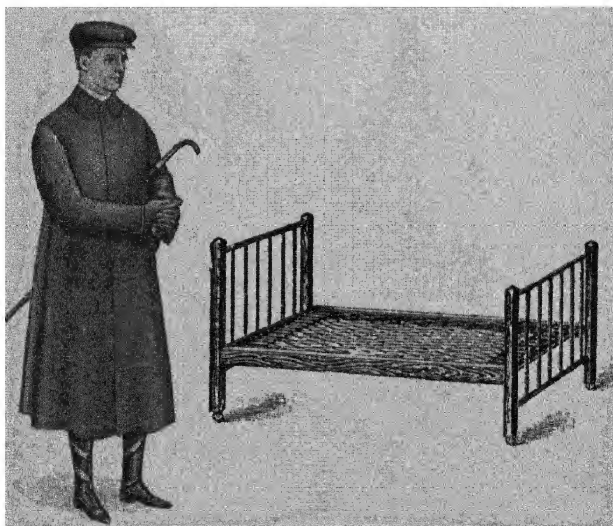
## WHAT A LIFE !

Suspicion fell first on the chief footman, whose embarrassment was greatly in his disfavour.



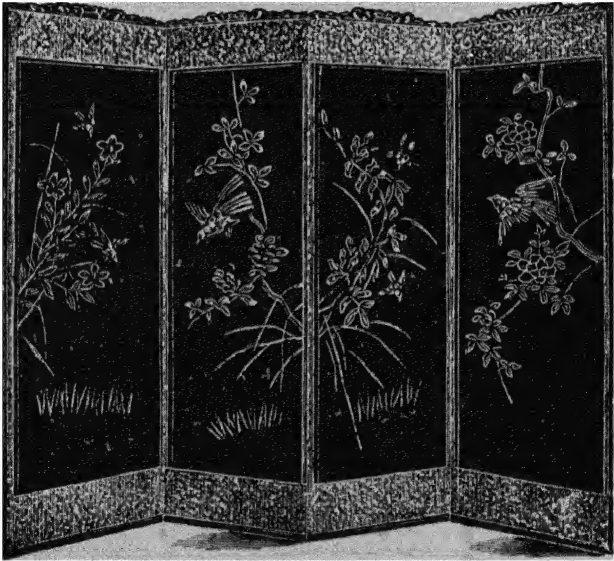
## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

Passing to the man's room the detective saw at a glance that the bed had not been slept on.



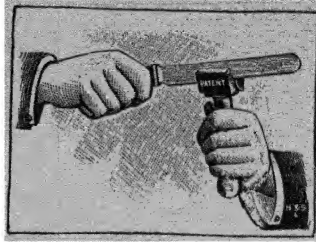
## WHAT A LIFE !

Meanwhile, being alone in the drawing room, I had an instinctive feeling that someone was hiding behind the screen,

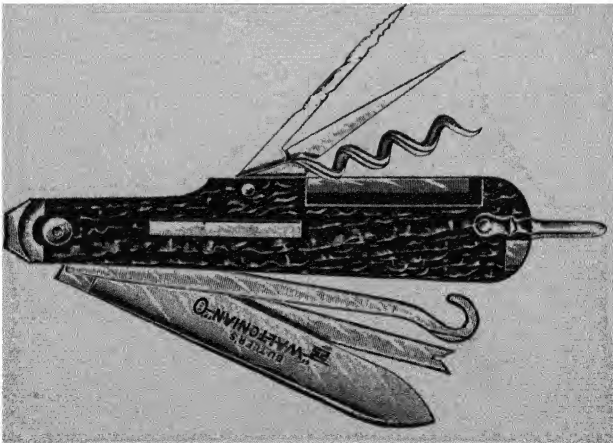


## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

and I was certain that I heard the sound of the sharpening of a knife.

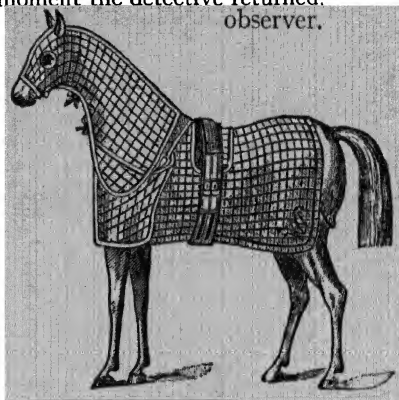


Having no other weapon handy, I produced my toothpick.



## WHAT A LIFE !

But at this moment the detective returned.  
in a disguise observer.



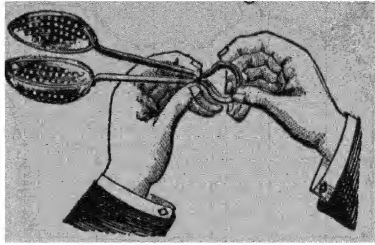
The contents of the  
mysterious bag having  
been analysed,





## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

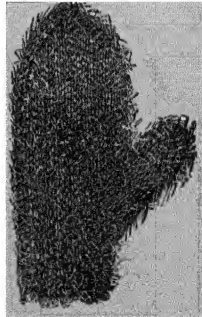
he showed us that the ring was movable,



and drew our attention to the fact that there were signs of a struggle.

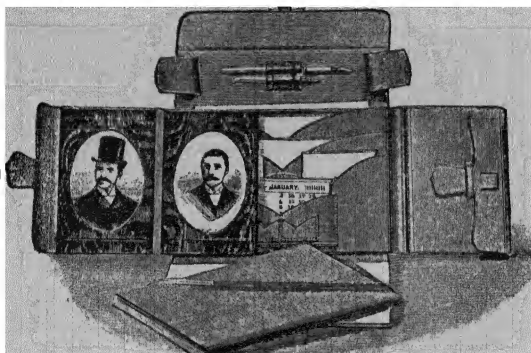


He then showed us the print of a blood-stained hand on the wall,



## WHAT A LIFE !

and producing his pocket book, convinced us that in spite of certain superficial differences, they were one and the same man.



We were immensely impressed, and in a few moments the burglar was fairly trapped.



## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

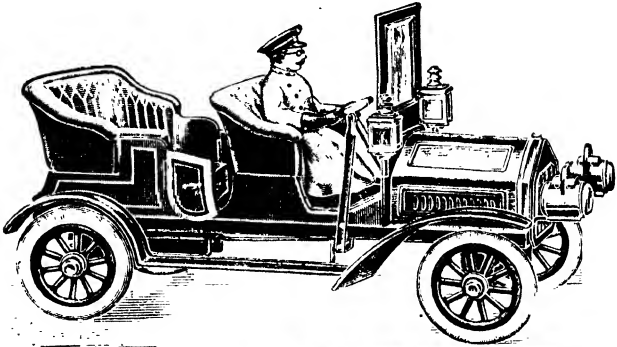
The detective then resumed his natural appearance,



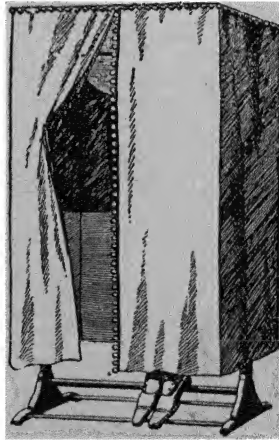
and was presented by Lord Bunderbourne with a heavy cheque.

## WHAT A LIFE!

While waiting for the prison van



he told us some good stories of his career. It was he, it seems, who was the real hero of the Charlotte Street anarchist plot, which he discovered by overhearing a conversation between two of the miscreants in a Soho restaurant.



## THE STOLEN DIAMONDS

He gave us also some curious information about the ingenious methods of famous criminals. There was, for example, the notorious one-eyed Jimmy Snaffles, who used a house-breaking implement of his own construction, which he would try on the trees outside before breaking into the house.



And there were that very respectable couple, Tom Bilks and his wife, who entered houses with scaling ladders at night, and kept a blameless registry office in Balham through the day.



## CHAPTER XIV

### WILLIAM DE MORGAN

A late flowering—Links with Lamb—*Joseph Vance*—Domestic humours—Mary Webb—The Macdonald sisters—The Mackails

IN 1906 a strange thing happened in the literary world. A first novel was published, which everyone delighted in, by an author who had not written a word of it until he was over sixty. Reminiscences can easily be the first books of old men, but novels seldom are, if ever. The book was called *Joseph Vance* and the author was William de Morgan. *Joseph Vance* was not a revolutionary book; in fact it was old fashioned; but its somewhat Dickensian flavour was found to be not in the least against it, any more than it was a drawback to *The Good Companions* and *Angel Pavement* by Mr. Priestley many years later. And with the rapidity with which Mr. Priestley followed *The Good Companions* with *Angel Pavement*, de Morgan followed *Joseph Vance* with *Alice for Short* and *Somehow Good* and *It Never Can Happen Again*, and two or three others, and then, at the age of seventy-eight, died.

It is long since I saw any of his books, but I hope they are not forgotten, for they were far more than meteors and far better than most novels that are written to-day. If the trade papers were to print lists of the most popular old books of the month as well as of the latest one could learn much. There are so many authors, wizards in their own period, of whom one hears nothing now, yet who may still have an underground vogue. Only through a questionnaire to the booksellers and libraries could we get the figures.

Dickens, we are told, is constantly in demand; but what of Thackeray and George Eliot? Henry Kingsley's grave

at Cuckfield in Sussex was renovated by pious hands in 1931, but is he still read? What of his brother Charles? What of Meredith and Hardy? These are all story-tellers; and even more interesting is the position of the sages. Does anyone to-day allow himself to be taunted and abused and corrected by Carlyle? Is it possible that Ruskin, 'half seraph and half shrew', as some contemporary—I rather think Robert Buchanan—called him, has no longer any following? Carlyle I admit to finding antipathetic: he is always so right and righteous and apart, I always so wrong and contemptible and of the mob, while his style is too spasmodic and tortuous for my taste; whereas his pupil Ruskin moulded our wonderful English language to every mood and every shade of every mood, and could be as moving and as tranquillizing as an organ—and as persuasive too, where Carlyle his master was irritating. Yet no one could recreate a scene from the past so vividly as Carlyle, and no one, I suspect, was so seldom wrong.

To return to William de Morgan—he came of very interesting stock. His father was Augustus de Morgan, Professor of Mathematics at University College (where he was succeeded by W. K. Clifford) and author, among many other books, of a very suggestive and ingenious work called *A Budget of Paradoxes*, which I read years ago and found extremely entertaining, although mathematics are as much outside my capacity as Romanisch or Braille. One of his remarks was to the effect that every man's mother was Mrs. Nickleby and every man's wife Mrs. Caudle, which is quite in his son's manner.

William de Morgan, whose mother was Sophie Frend, daughter of William Frend of Cambridge, the fighting Unitarian, and one whom Elia knew and liked, was born in 1839 and educated (like Joseph Chamberlain) at University College School. He became first a painter. His instructor, by the way, forms a link with Lamb, whom his mother had known well, for it was Francis Cary, son of Cary of the British Museum (at whose official residence Lamb once exceeded), the translator of Dante; while the

younger Cary himself was the painter of that picture of Charles and Mary Lamb together in their room which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. De Morgan passed from Cary to the Academy Schools, but when he was about twenty-five he gave up painting pictures for designing stained glass, and a few years later he gave up stained glass for pottery. His furnace being in Cheyne Row, two doors from Carlyle, de Morgan varied the monotony of baking tiles by taking the philosopher for walks and failing to understand anything that he said—not for lack of intellect, but for want of a glossary to the Ecclefechan tongue.

Many good judges consider the tiles and vessels designed and coloured by de Morgan to be among the artistic triumphs of the last century. Never since the Persians has so beautiful a blue burned on earthenware. I know more than one room that is distinguished and lighted by the presence of this colour and its confederate green. But in 1904 he ceased to make it, and began *Joseph Vance*.

Hitherto, according to Disraeli, to fail as an artist had been to re-emerge as a critic. De Morgan, the least critical and most tolerant of men, changed all that by emerging as a novelist; while he set up a second record by doing so at the advanced age of sixty-four, and doing so, moreover, with conspicuous youthfulness and triumph.

After de Morgan—who, I think, by reason of his absolute command of his new medium must stand first among these strange elderly experimentalists—the prize for late fruitage in fiction goes, I suppose, to another artist with a not very dissimilar name—to George du Maurier, whose neighbour de Morgan once was, in a Newman Street Studio. The parallel is indeed pretty close, but fate, alas! cut short the life of that rare spirit when only *Peter Ibbetson*, *Trilby*, and *The Martians* had been written. What beautiful and tender stories he carried to the grave we shall never know. The parallel can be continued a little farther, for it was an illness that also set du Maurier on his new adventure; at least, his failing sight, steadily growing worse and worse, made it necessary for him to think seriously about some second



support—some walking-stick (in Oliver Wendell Holmes's metaphor) to add to the crutch which his *Punch* work represented.

Readers of novels are a strange folk, upon whose probable or even possible tastes no wise book-maker would ever venture to bet ; and rarely have they bestowed their sudden patronage more unexpectedly than upon de Morgan's histories of family life. For consider what he was offering when *Joseph Vance* crept into the world and at once conquered : a very long (230,000 words) novel about middle-class and labouring people in mid-Victorian England, circumstantial to the least detail, very deliberate in movement, without raptures of passion or heights of any kind, without romantic glamour or excess, without intrigue, and one might almost say without plot. And yet, in spite of this, in spite of the abnormal length of the book, in spite of the author's unknown name and absence of those trumpet-blasts with which England and America are so vulgarly familiarized, *Joseph Vance* instantly made its way, and thousand succeeded thousand, and every dinner-table canvassed and extended its merits.

And then came *Alice for Short*, of the same outrageous length, and then *Somehow Good*, each doing the same thing, each capturing its thousands too, and assisting parents of new babies to novel names, and even helping to the christening also of new boats ; for de Morgan, when I met him in 1908, had just heard with much pleasure of a ' Merpussy ' at Henley. And why all this popularity ? Well, the reason is, I take it, that *Joseph Vance* and its companions are sincere and sympathetic and humorous. Life in their crowded pages is seen through the eyes of one who loves his fellow-men and who is interested chiefly in their sweeter and more conversable side.

We like to smile more than to laugh, and de Morgan keeps us smiling. His success is the triumph of the humorist, and I consider him almost the perfect example of the humorist—certainly the completes\* since Lamb—by humorist meaning one who brings to this life a lovable

whimsicality of his own and a desire to discover it in others, and who never, under any conditions however serious, loses either the gift or the desire. There is nothing in any of de Morgan's books, any more than in Lamb's essays, to make one laugh outright ; nothing as there is in Dickens and Mark Twain and Leacock, for example ; but, on the other hand, there is hardly a single page that is free from a smile. They are of a piece ; the author is always true to his idiosyncrasy and sets up no bulkheads between serious and comic. And de Morgan's humour has also the attraction of being normal humour. It irradiates normal life ; we can check it and find it accurate.

Humour, however, is not all. There must also be enough dramatic interest to hold the reader, and in the character-drawing enough fidelity to the fact to persuade. De Morgan loved character and he gave himself every freedom in creating pleasant people. In the de Morgan world it is hard to find an unattractive figure even among the less admirable. One feels them to be the creations of a mind writing to please itself, and therefore writing the kind of fiction that itself wants to read. Hence the charm of the young women. Whether he made them so attractive for himself or for us matters nothing, but, when all is said, it was, I suspect, these same young women who did most to carry de Morgan into editions : Lossie and Janey and Peggy and Alice, and perhaps, above all, Sally. All brave and humorous and gay, and all trailing clouds of glory from the fairyland from which they had just come. I can imagine de Morgan taking up his own novels (for, as his mother's illustrious friend proved, a good man may laugh at his own joke) and reading and re-reading them with extraordinary gusto.

I met him at dinner at the Mackails, Mrs. Mackail being the daughter of his old friend Edward Burne-Jones, and I found him to be very tall and slender, with a pointed grey beard and a very high dome-like forehead. A caricaturist would depict him by putting an egg on a lamp-post. In conversation he was fantastic, in a high, thin, rather Cockney voice, his stories being of that pleasant variety which loiter

and laugh on the way rather than come brilliantly to the point. Odd names he said always fascinated him, and he was delighted with the recent discovery in his own Chelsea of an alley called Crooked Usage.

All his novels, which I have heard described as fairy tales flavoured with bulls'-eyes, are rich in oddity and amusing details; *Joseph Vance* is perhaps richest, as is natural with first novels and especially with the first novels of observant men who have not begun to write until they are mature. He confessed to me that one reason why *Joseph Vance* was easier to write, and, in a way, pleasanter to write, than the others, was that he could go ahead with no fear that he was repeating himself; whereas when it came to *Alice for Short* and *Somehow Good* and their successors, he was continually haunted by a dread that he had said this or that before. His method of work, he said, was to sit before a piece of paper with his pen in his hand—in summer in Chelsea, and in winter in Florence—and wait for the words to come. It sounds very simple. About two thousand words a day were his average, and he rejected about as much as he kept. He had a very definite general idea before him, but many of the details surprised him as much as they surprise the reader. In other words, his books, like *Topsy*, were not born, but grew.

Should William de Morgan's novels have already passed into oblivion they should be rescued. Writers of merit who for some reason or other have been neglected can, now and then, if they have some genuine quality, have publicity forced upon them. There is the case of Mary Webb. She wrote stories of country folk living on the borders of Wales and Shropshire, somewhat in the manner of Hardy but with more directness. Among their titles are *Precious Bane*, *The Golden Arrow* and *Gone to Earth*. Well, Mary Webb wrote her books, she found a publisher, good judges liked them—I remember being urged by Barrie to read *Precious Bane*—but they did not sell, nor had they begun to sell when she died, in 1927. Then came, in 1928, the Annual Banquet of the Royal Literary Fund, at which

the Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, himself from Worcestershire, adjoining Shropshire, was in the chair, and in the course of his speech, which was as admirable as his every oratorical effort—effortless effort—can be, he referred to certain novels of a part of the country that he knew well, by a neglected writer, novels which he thought among the truest pictures in literature of a district and a people; and within a few months edition after edition of Mary Webb's stories, one with a preface by Mr. Baldwin himself, were sold.

Mention of Mr. Baldwin brings me back to the Mackails, for he is Mrs. Mackail's first cousin. He is also Mr. Kipling's first cousin, one of the wonderful Macdonald sisters having married Lockwood Kipling, one Alfred Baldwin, one Burne-Jones and one E. J. Poynter. Kipling dedicated an early book to his mother, as 'the wittiest woman in India'; I have heard his aunt Georgiana, Lady Burne-Jones, called the wittiest woman in England; and I am not sure that the title does not now apply to her daughter, Mrs. Mackail. Heredity has seen to it that the novels of Denis Mackail do not lack the spice too, while his sister, Angela, in a little book called *Three Houses*, has just recreated with extraordinary skill and charm a late Victorian childhood, with Burne-Jones and Lady Burne-Jones beneficently in the background.

J. W. Mackail is one of the most learned and fastidious of living scholars. His prose translations of the Greek Anthology are masterpieces of felicity, and his own poems have a very rare quality, such, for instance, as this quatrain on his old instructor in the classics, Professor Sellar:

'Where nineteen summers' festal feet had gone,  
The darkness gathers round thee, laid alone;  
And there, unchanged, unshadowed, lie with thee  
Kindness and truth and magnanimity.'

As a further title to fame it should be mentioned that there is no quotation from the *Bab Ballads* which the Professor of Ancient Literature to the Royal Academy cannot complete.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE WAR

A Hippodrome Revue—Flirtations with the Stage—George Alexander's prudence—*Methuen's Annual*—Two cases of prevision—The Louvain outrage—*Swollen-headed William*—John Lane and William Heinemann—*The Debt*—An Italian mission—*Outposts of Mercy*—A mock diary of the war—Humbert Wolfe's memory

WHEN the War broke out I was forty-six and not robust or athletic enough to falsify my age with any benefit to the army, as Mason was able to do. I therefore went on with my own work and even extended its limits by completing a commission to collaborate in a revue for the London Hippodrome, called *Business as Usual*, writing for it a heartening song entitled 'When we Wind up the Watch on the Rhine'.

This, I may say here, was not my only flirtation with the stage, after the Brighton pantomime, but it was the most successful, due rather to Violet Loraine and Harry Tate and some excellent spectacular and dancing effects than to the genius of 'F. W. Mark', the pseudonym I selected as being 'the next thing' to E. V. Luke.

Besides this I had written, some years before, with Barrie's helping hand, a little play called *The Visit of the King*, which ran or stumbled at the Palace Theatre for three weeks; and much later I wrote a full-length comedy called *The Same Star* which was performed at the Leeds Repertory Theatre for six evenings and has been published as a book. Not much of a stage career! One other incursion into drama came also in the War, when for a charity performance at the King's Theatre, Chelsea, I wrote a sketch around George Moore's tendency to have his portrait painted, called

' His Fatal Beauty ', which Clement Shorter included in a series of his privately printed pamphlets ; and, later, I wrote another sketch in which Ellen Terry and her two grandchildren, Nelly and Teddy Craig, appeared. This was called ' Ellen Terry's Bouquet '.

The stipulation of the adorable old lady, who had completely lost the power of memorizing, was that she herself should not have any words to learn ; and it was arranged therefore as a duologue between the children, with their grandmother present, active but silent. I was really proud of the ingenuity with which Miss Terry, still radiant and beautiful, was thus brought back to the stage, without tears, so to speak. But intimations began to reach me from various sources that she was making it a grievance that the author had written nothing for her to utter—most extraordinary and perplexing !—so I wrote an epilogue, embodying an appeal for the charity, and we had it printed in enormous type and placed on a reading desk so that she could declaim it.

Teddy Craig, son of Gordon Craig, and now, under the name of Edward Carrick, a producer of films, was a most charming boy. We exchanged gifts during our dramatic association ; I gave him a pocket-knife, and in return he drew for me the picture which is reproduced in this book.

I still think, although I have been beaten in the struggle, that writing a play should be a simpler task than writing a novel. For the novelist has to do all the work himself, whereas the dramatist has actors and actresses at his call, each with a definite and, very likely, attractive personality. It is hard to have to surrender, for there can be few greater pleasures for the artist than to hear his words spoken and see them being translated into action. So little of the Hippodrome revue remained mine that my participation didn't matter and I never acquired the paternal sense, but when the little play *The Visit of the King* was at the Palace I was present at every performance, scowling at those members of the audience who were not properly attentive, fawning on those who laughed in the right place.

This play, by the way, began as a transcript of English life, the King being expected at a provincial town where he was to lay a foundation-stone, and the subject-matter being the excitement in the Mayor's household ; but the Scotch dramatic company who had produced *Buntly Pulls the Strings*, having at the moment nothing to do, Barrie turned it into Scotch for me and it was played by them. Before it could be accepted it had, of course, to pass the Censor, who struck me as being in an unusually exacting, if not puritanical, mood that morning, for a reference to the King as a stamp collector—one of the Mayor's family proposed to show His Majesty his album—was sternly struck out.

Before leaving the story of my dramatic efforts, I ought to mention the letter I received from Sir George Alexander after he had read one of my rambling narratives—I think *Mr. Ingleside*. Would I come to lunch, he said, and talk over the possibility of writing a play in which he could speak some of the things I ' wrote so beautifully '. I rang the bell in Pont Street with the hand of a successful dramatist, but the delusion soon passed ; for we could not agree. I said I would devote myself to the writing of a play for Alexander if he would definitely commission it, because I always fulfilled my undertakings ; he said he could not commission, but if he liked what I had done he would pay well and advance two hundred pounds. I said that it was his duty to gamble on me, since it was he who had approached me and not I him : otherwise he had got me there under false pretences. He said no ; that was not the way business was done. We were on the best of terms except as regarded the matter in hand, and I heard no more about it. My feeling is that he was wrong : two hundred pounds would have been well ventured on the experiment, because to put an honourable and not too unintelligent man on his mettle is a sound proceeding. Furthermore he had approved of my sense of dialogue.

I should, as I have said, like to be acted ; but it is better, probably, to accept defeat. Play-writing and descriptive and reflective writing are so different. Plays, for instance,

need no adjectives ; the actors are the adjectives. Again, in the making of dialogue there is nothing to dig the pen into ; no resistance. It is like spading water. And should the play have been accepted, the rehearsals would probably have brought me to the grave and certainly would have ruined all my other work. Yet . . . But no.

One of the first acts of the War was to ruin the chances of a compilation which I had been preparing for the previous six months and which reached the bookstalls at the end of July. This was the first number of *Methuen's Annual*, a miscellany intended to come out once a year but which never appeared again. It contained a variety of very good things by the best writers of the day, and the cover was designed by Lovat Fraser, then just beginning his fine but lamentably brief career as a decorative artist. Elsewhere in this book will be found the drawing which he made for me of the cottage ' Button Snap ' at Buntingford in Hertfordshire, which Lamb inherited from his godfather Francis Fielde in 1812.

Barrie was represented in *Methuen's Annual* by a school episode adapted from old *St. James' Gazette* articles ; Arnold Bennett sent me an unpublished journal to select from ; John Galsworthy wrote a fantasy ; ' Saki ', ' Ernest Bramah ' (the inventor of Kai Lung), F. Anstey and Stephen Leacock wrote humorous stories ; Hugh Walpole provided a study of cathedral life ; and Austin Dobson, Maurice Hewlett, John Drinkwater, P. R. Chalmers and Bowyer Nichols were the poets. My own share, after bringing this constellation together, was chiefly to edit some unpublished letters of Ruskin, Browning and R. L. S. as make-weight.

Of two of the contributions I may say a little more. One was a quatrain by Bowyer Nichols, the father of Robert Nichols and himself an exquisite artificer in verse, whose first appearance as a poet was in a joint-volume, with J. W. Mackail and H. C. Beeching, entitled *Love's Looking Glass*. Among the brief poems which he allowed me to use was this :



## THE MOURNER

I met the mother of my friend who died,  
 And kind and tender were the words she said ;  
 But this was what her poor eyes could not hide :  
 What right have you to live, and he be dead ?

One of my own original contributions was the following brief story :

## THE CHOICE

A mother lost her soldier son. The news came to her in despatches from the war. He had fallen fighting nobly at the head of his regiment.

She was inconsolable. 'Oh that I might see him again !' she prayed. 'If only for five minutes—but to see him !'

An angel answered her prayer. 'For five minutes,' the angel said.

'Quick ! Quick !' said the mother, her tears turned to momentary joy.

'Yes,' said the angel, 'but think a little. He was a grown man. There are thirty years to choose from. How would you see him ?'

The mother paused and wondered.

'Would you see him,' said the angel, 'as a soldier dying heroically at his post ? Would you see him as he left you to join the transport ? Would you see him again as on that day at school when he stepped to the platform to receive the highest honours a boy could have ?'

'How did you know ?' the mother asked, her eyes lighting.

The angel smiled. 'Would you see him as a baby at your breast ? Would you——'

'No,' said the mother, 'I would have him for five minutes as he was one day when he ran in from the garden to ask my forgiveness for being naughty. He was so small and so unhappy ; and he was very hot and the tears were making streaks down his face through the garden dirt. And he flew to my arms with such force that he hurt me.'

Both the poem and the story were written and printed before the War broke out, but both were so applicable to the tragic situation of so many bereaved mothers in the

weeks and years to follow, that probably few readers unaware of the circumstances would believe that they preceded August, 1914.

Naturally the War directed most of the literary activities of us all. I could not fight, but there was nothing to stop me criticizing the foe. I began, immediately after the invasion of Belgium and the destruction of the library at Louvain, by compiling, in a fever of indignation, an anthology in praise of honest fighting. The full title was *Remember Louvain! A Little Book of Liberty and War*, and I chose as a motto this extract from a letter from the mother of a youth who had just gone to the Front: 'I wonder why you pity me. I am so glad to have a son to go, and one who is ready to go and fight. The mothers I pity are those who have civilian sons who are now useless. I cannot imagine anything better for a man than to fight in this war, which is so manifestly righteous. I only wish I could go myself or had ten sons to send.'

*Remember Louvain!*, which was made up of poems new and old, from Shakespeare ('King Henry's rally') and Wordsworth ('It is not to be thought of') to Newbolt ('England') and Kipling ('Hymn before Action' and 'The Return'), was published in September, 1914—very quick work.

A month or so later I was busy on a new version of *Struwwelpeter*, or *Shock-headed Peter*, the German nursery classic, to which I gave an anti-Kaiser turn by calling it *Swollen-headed William*, with George Morrow to adapt the pictures. Two of the pages, which are reproduced here, prove that we were not without prophetic insight.

My next effort was a travesty of a propagandist work by Dr. Sven Hedin, the Swedish geographer and traveller. This distinguished man, who hitherto had not been looked upon as a foe of England, suddenly produced a book, obviously officially inspired, minimizing or even denying German atrocities and coming out very strongly as anti-British. It was a piece of special pleading, entitled *With the German Armies in the West*, which seemed to ask for

## THE STORY OF WILLY HEAD-IN-AIR.



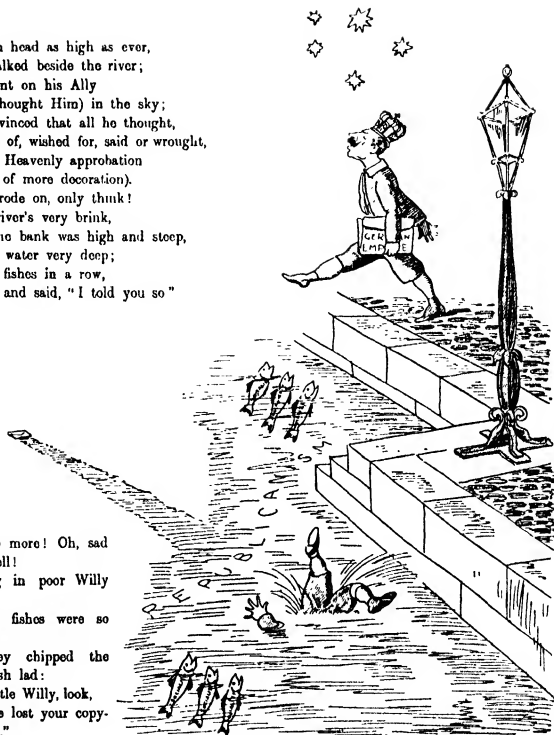
As he lived, from day to day,  
It was always Willy's way  
At the sky above to stare,  
And the stars that dazzled there  
(Which, as every German knows,  
Aren't the twinklers we suppose,  
But rewards the Kaiser's given,  
As encouragement, to Heaven—  
Medals of the second class  
For assistance in Alsace;  
Crosses, jewels in profusion,  
Recompensing the collusion).  
Running just in Willy's way  
Came a little dog one day.  
William's eyes were still astray  
Up on high,  
In the sky;  
And he never heard them cry,  
"Willy, mind the dog is nigh!"  
Bump!  
Dump!  
Down he fell with such a thump!

*By George Morrow*

*From Swollen-headed William\* (1914)*

Still with head as high as ever,  
 Willy walked beside the river;  
 Still intent on his Ally  
 (As he thought Him) in the sky;  
 Still convinced that all he thought,  
 Dreamed of, wished for, said or wrought,  
 Had the Heavenly approbation  
 (Worthy of more decoration).  
 So he strode on, only think!  
 To the river's very brink,  
 Where the bank was high and steep,  
 And the water very deep;  
 And the fishes in a row,  
 Laughed and said, "I told you so"

One step more! Oh, sad  
 to tell!  
 Headlong in poor Willy  
 fell;  
 And the fishes were so  
 glad,  
 And they chipped the  
 foolish lad:  
 "Silly little Willy, look,  
 You have lost your copy-  
 book."



By George Morrow  
 From 'Swollen-headed William' (1914)

some attention, and I therefore wrote a burlesque of it called *In Gentlest Germany*, by Hun Svedend (or unsweetened) ; and George Morrow drove it home with his pencil.

*In Gentlest Germany*, which came out in 1915, was my only book published by John Lane, whom I had long known in other ways. A brisk, questing little man, with very pro-



**"I see the false Sir Edward Grey . . . and on either side, categorically demanding the British Empire, the magnificent figures of the German Emperor and the Crown Prince"**

*By George Morrow  
From 'In Gentlest Germany' (1915)*

minent eyes and a neat pointed beard, he wished to be in every new movement ; and he was in most, but more as a tradesman than an intellect. Although too many of his swans were geese, he was a friend to literature by virtue of a genuine enthusiasm.

Of all the publishers I have known I should name William

Heinemann as the most imaginative and gifted, with the best taste in the production of books. I never heard why



“Von Tirpitz, whose impressive whiskers have been so useful as a pattern to the devisers of search-lights.”

*By George Morrow  
From 'In Gentlest Germany' (1915)*

he chose a windmill as his trade mark, but it was part of his instinct for the best to get William Nicholson to design it.

The same wisdom led him to attach Gosse to the firm as adviser, and later, when he needed a partner, to select Sidney Pawling, not only as a clever man behind the sleepest features in London, but as a typical bluff Englishman (he used to bowl fast for Middlesex) with an open friendly manner such as would be acceptable to those authors who were not enamoured of an Hebraic approach.

In July 1916 my brother Perceval, who, though thirty-six when the trouble began, had enlisted at once, was killed in our Somme offensive, at Fricourt, leaving a widow (*née* Madeline Meynell) and three small daughters. In some lines called *The Debt* I tried to express the thoughts, indignant, perplexed and ashamed, which were seething in my mind at that time :

#### THE DEBT

No more old England will they see—  
Those men who've died for you and me.

So lone and cold they lie ; but we,  
We still have life ; we still may greet  
Our pleasant friends in home and street ;  
We still have life, are able still  
To climb the turf of Bignor Hill,  
To see the placid sheep go by,  
To hear the sheep-dog's eager cry,  
To feel the sun, to taste the rain,  
To smell the Autumn scents again  
Beneath the brown and gold and red  
Which old October's brush has spread,  
To hear the robin in the lane,  
To look upon the English sky.

So young they were, so strong and well,  
Until the bitter summons fell—  
Too young to die,  
Yet there on foreign soil they lie,  
So pitiful, with glassy eye  
And limbs all tumbled anyhow ;  
Quite finished, now.

On every heart, lest we forget—  
Secure at home—engrave this debt !

Too delicate is flesh to be  
The shield that nations interpose  
'Twixt red Ambition and his foes—  
The bastion of Liberty.  
So beautiful their bodies were,  
Built with so exquisite a care :  
So young and fit and lithe and fair.  
The very flower of us were they,  
The very flower, but yesterday !  
Yet now so pitiful they lie,  
Where love of country bade them hie  
To fight this fierce Caprice—and die.  
All mangled now, where shells have burst  
And lead and steel have done their worst ;  
The tender tissues ploughed away,  
The year's slow processes effaced :  
The Mother of us all—disgraced

And some leave wives behind, young wives ;  
Already some have launched new lives :  
A little daughter, little son—  
For thus this blundering world goes on.  
But never more will any see  
The old secure felicity,  
The kindnesses that made us glad  
Before the world went mad.  
They'll never hear another bird,  
Another gay or loving word—  
Those men who lie so cold and lone,  
Far in a country not their own ;  
Those men who died for you and me,  
That England still might sheltered be  
And all our lives go on the same  
(Although to live is almost shame).

Later I succeeded in getting two small semi-official tasks in connection with the War : one to make a tour of inspection of the Boy Scouts' camps along the South Coast and write



articles on them, and one to visit the British Red Cross Stations on the Italian-Austrian front for the purpose of stimulating home interest. But I never presumed to call either of these agreeable excursions 'War work'. In Italy I was associated with our Chief Commissioner, Lord Monson, to whom all languages are one (instead of, as in my case, one language being all), and together we penetrated to some very cold—it was mid-winter—and some very dangerous places. I wrote an account of it all in a little book called *Outposts of Mercy*, but I should like to repeat here what a pleasure it was to meet George Trevelyan, now Professor of History at Cambridge and O.M., at the hospital he was controlling at the Villa Trenta near Udine, and with what excitement I found myself, at one Alpine mess, sitting next to the Italian general who had discovered in Tripoli the Venus of Cyrene, then the latest glory of the Museo Nazionale in Rome. At Gorizia, which was then between two fires, one Italian and one Austrian, and so constantly bombarded that I could almost believe myself at last a combatant, we stayed with Geoffrey Young, famous as a mountaineer and also a poet of distinction and grace.

Here are the last pages of *Outposts of Mercy*, the sale of which brought the Red Cross some fifty pounds :

'I close this little account of the fine enterprise of my fellow-countrymen and countrywomen under the Red Cross in Italy, with a word or two about the work that is being done by Mrs. Henry Watkins, who is not associated with our Red Cross, but has an independent mission of her own, in which a few friends assist her and of which General Cadorna is a sympathetic patron.

We had a glimpse, you will remember, of three ladies in a little pretty wooden hut at Cervignano station, waiting for an ambulance train to come in, so that they might carry hot coffee and rolls to every passenger. Now let us meet the organizer and moving spirit of this mission, Mrs. Watkins, herself, in another hut, at the station of San Giovanni di Manzano, a few minutes' drive from the Villa Trento.

But first I would say that most of us, I suppose, if not all of us, have, during the war, been confronted by

the question, to what extent are certain of the amenities of the soldier's life for which donations are asked necessary? And while no one would grudge the fighting man any pleasures or luxuries that public or private munificence can add to his lot, a graduated scale of their importance has to be conceded. Not all are equally useful or merciful. But no doubts as to usefulness and mercifulness could assail anyone observing Mrs. Watkins and her helpers distributing food and drink in an ambulance train; especially as the authorities have had to make the meal time-table inflexible, so that a wounded man, brought in just too late for, say, breakfast, would have no chance of food until lunch, even though he had long been fasting.

The train that we saw had come from I know not where—probably Cormons—taking on its batches of broken men at each station. At San Giovanni di Manzano, where we now are, it is complete, and starts in earnest for Milan. The San Giovanni contingent had been brought to a shed to wait, some lying on the straw, some sitting up. The majority were sufferers from *pie-de ingelati*—or trench feet. Such as could not walk, but did not need stretchers, were carried from the shed to the train, a considerable distance, on the backs of two or three sturdy fellows who made nothing but a joke of it and showed no signs of fatigue. The spectacle of one soldier clinging to the back of another would ordinarily be anything but impressive, but there was so much kindness and cheerfulness on the part of the bearer, and so much content on the part of the other, that all the comic element disappeared and one thought only of the humanity of man to man that can follow man's appalling inhumanity. Besides, war makes so many odd things natural.

Except for a wound-dressing compartment, the kitchen, and the medical officers' quarters, the train was wholly given to patients. I hesitate to say how many compartments there were, but I should be surprised if there were fewer than thirty. I know that to walk through it unburdened took a considerable time; but Mrs. Watkins and her ladies walked through it carrying jugs and baskets (which had to be refilled two or three hundred yards away across the mud), and took it all as a matter of course. No light task, I can assure you, but, like all the ministering angels whom I have

met in this war, these refused assistance. It was their job and they preferred to do it alone. Chivalry, at any rate in its more superficial forms, has had a poor time of late. The war is so exacting an employer that its servants have come to realize that they must do their own work individually or something will go wrong.

I have mentioned elsewhere the impression of dark and pathetically patient eyes that one receives in Italian hospitals. Here again, walking along this interminable train filled with the innocent victims of other men's ambition, it was the dark, pathetically patient eyes of the wounded that one saw first and will remember last. Many of the men were cheery enough—for were they not bound for the comforts of Milan hospitals, with the front far away?—and many laughed; but the dominant impression once more was of dark eyes pathetically patient, with no resentment against fate, but far from understanding what it all meant.'

Finally, the struggle over, George Morrow and I again conspired, producing a survey of the less admirable or more spectacular activities on the Home Front. This was called *Quoth the Raven: an Unofficial History of the War*, and, once again, the diary form was chosen. Here are some entries:

'The Prime Minister begins to hoard voice lozenges.

Mr. Belloc lays down several dozen of the best Blue Black Ink.

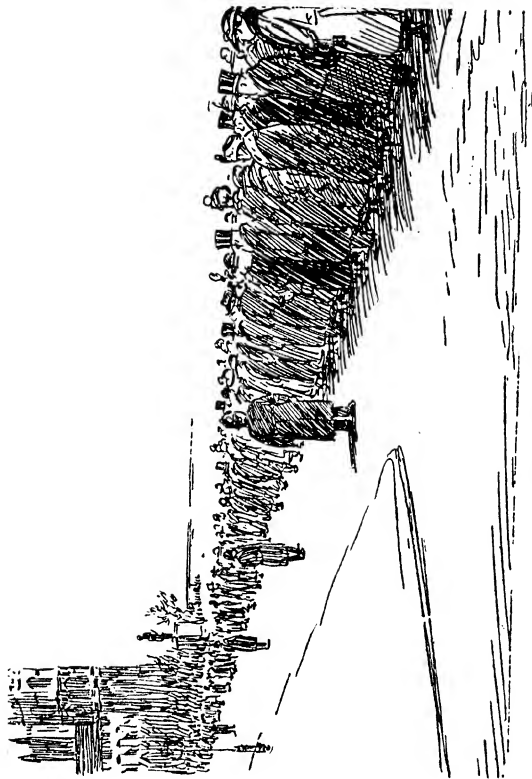
War declared. Russian soldiers begin to pass through England by night trains.

Mr. Lloyd George in clarion call at the Queen's Hall states that "this war, like the next war, is a war to end war".

Extra Newmarket race meeting held to show that the nation is really roused. Chief Secretary for War wins Armageddon Stakes.

The birth of Dora discovered to be not in the least exaggerated.

Mr. Lloyd George, in profoundly moving peroration at Cwcccdych, repeats that "this war, like the next war, is a war to end war".



**CHRISTIANITY SHORTAGE**  
Scene in yesterday's queue at Westminster Abbey  
*By George Morrow*  
From 'Quoth the Raven' (1919)

Mr. Winston Churchill makes resonant two-hour speech at Savoy banquet on the paramount importance of everyone saying nothing but doing his utmost.

Mr. Lloyd George delivers three-hour speech at Brighton on the imperative need of actions rather than words.

The Poet Laureate takes to his bed on finding that one line in his latest poem could be scanned by a member of the public.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton by successful camouflage enters the Navy as powder monkey.

Before starting for the Front, Sir Oliver Lodge invites Sir William Richmond to camouflage his dome.

It is formally agreed by Brighton Town Council to change the name to Brighthelmstein for the Jewration.

Mr. Lloyd George reminds a tiring public that this war, like the next war, is a war to end war.

Mr. Edward Marsh appointed Minister of War Poetry.

Critical shortage of jockeys. The Government again forbids racing.

Attempted assassination of Mr. Pelman by a band of politicians who deprecate long memories.

President Wilson bares his gums. Panic everywhere but in Mexico.

General Smuts says that the war is won, but must go on a little longer for the sake of appearances.

Death, from exposure, of voluntary lady motor driver after waiting four hours for an officer outside his Bridge Club.

The Food shortage intensifying, the Minister of Agriculture forbids the feeding of any animals except racehorses.

Welsh Wizard, with traditional dialectical skill and fervid charm, nails England's war aims to the counter. "This war, like the next war," he affirms, amid terrific enthusiasm at Blwydfe, "is a war to end war".

The Gloomy Dean publicly burned in Smithfield. Otherwise a meatless day.



#### SHE HEARTENS OUR HEROES

Miss Elsie Spink, whose delightful dancing is the chief attraction in the new *revue* at the Hanwell Empire. A sincere patriot, she thinks the war cannot last much longer.



#### UNWEARIED BY WAR WORK

Sir Thomas Tucker, O.B.E., who has done his bit by asking every one he meets, "Don't you know there's a war on?" Few names in the recent honours list were more popular. He is confident the war is not yet over.



#### A VICARIOUS HERO

Mr. Henry Foss, of Putney, whose wife has just got a post in the War Office canteen. Mr. Foss was among the first to see our gallant lads off to the Front.



#### AN IMPOSTOR

Mr. James Frederick Honeyman, who posed as an O.B.E. and obtained several sums of money from charitable people at Accrington. He is wanted by the police, and we publish this photograph with the hope that it may lead to his arrest. Readers will note that he has probably removed his whiskers.



#### HEROIC KNIGHT

Sir Lindsey Wolsey, who has never wavered in his belief that the war will end next year. He has been indefatigable in organising whist drives for charitable purposes.



#### UNWEARIED BY WAR WORK

Mrs. Gatwick-Badminton, who has acted frequently in theatrical performances in aid of war charities. Her husband is secretary to the Minister of Admonitions and is very appreciative of his wife's acting. He thinks the war may last another three days at least.



#### SAGE BARONET

Latest portrait of Sir Townley Whiffn, who is uncle of Miss Emily Sprules, the organiser of "Happy Half-Hours for Heroes." She is unwearied by war work. Sir Townley believes that the war has still a long way to go.



#### A WAR BRIDE

Miss Sonia Roomer, daughter of Sir Hugh Roomer, of the Pines, Hants, who is to marry Captain Frank Bosham of the P.T.O. She is unmovable in her devotion to the cause.

By George Morrow  
From 'Quoth the Raven' (1919)

A  
RECONSTRUCTION  
MOTTO  
FOR  
MR. BULL  
"HOME, JOHN!"



NEW PEER

The ex-Food Controller has chosen as his title Baron Larder of Kew.



UNWEARIED BY WAR WORK

Mrs. Hamelyn Pfeiffer, whose car collided with a tank bank last Wednesday, has quite recovered from the shock. Her husband, who is in the Cheese Controller's Office, thinks we may expect an important naval battle in the near future.



A WAR BRIDE

The Hon. Ethel Orpington, daughter of Lord Orpington, whose engagement to Captain Whynott, of the Buffs, has just been announced. She has been to no fewer than thirty fancy dress war dances and gives August as the probable end of hostilities.

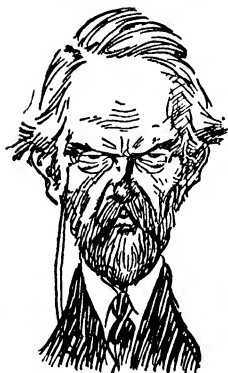
By George Morrow  
From 'Quoth the Raven' (1919)





#### THE OPTIMIST

Sir Henry Tulgen, Mayor of Puggleton, reviews Boy Scouts. He is an ardent golfer and a successful amateur photographer. Unwearied by war work, he is convinced that we shall at last see daylight.



#### TRAITOR TO HIS COUNTRY

Mr. Bunfield Sparrow, who was fined £860 and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for boarding macaroni in his house at Denmark Hill. His wife is the youngest of the three beautiful daughters of the late Mayor of Pinner, Sir Andrew Putten.



#### UNWEARIED BY WAR WORK

Miss Hilda Overbury-Parkes is doing a milk round twice a day at Sidcup, and says she enjoys the work immensely. She thinks the war has only just begun. e

By George Morrow  
From 'Quoth the Raven' (1919)

One-thousandth performance of the comic war play, *Catrying On*, which brings the humours of carnage so amusingly across the footlights.



#### SERIOUS LAMP-POST SHORTAGE FOR PROFITEERS

Public Official: "You must take your prisoner and put him at the end of the queue. You see, we've only one lamp-post for this district."

*By George Morrow  
From 'Quoth the Raven' (1919)*

Atlantic goes dry. The Duke of Reading returns from New York by motor-car.

As a compliment to the Trans-Atlantic war-winners, London theatres entirely occupied by American plays and performers.

Dry America casts longing glances towards our tight little Island.

Mr. Lloyd George, in replying to a vote of thanks for his work in saving the world, reminds his hearers never to forget that the war he has brought to so glorious a conclusion was, like the next war, a war to end war.

Readers who can remember the newspapers of those dismal days will know whether the following *Gems of Oratory* are representative or not :

‘ To secure a permanent peace we must have a permanent war.’—*Field-Marshal Lord Dynevor at Ponder’s End.*

‘ We must live to be mean, unless we do not mean to live.’—*The Food Controller.*

‘ When we have sacrificed all—our time, our money, and our lives—it yet remains for us to make a final sacrifice—we must dine at home.’—*Lady Fribble at the Guildhall.*

‘ If everyone controlled his appetite there would be no need for a Food Controller.’—*Lord Yapp at Barking.*

‘ To tell the truth is to help the enemy.’—*Mr Bonar Law in the House of Commons.*

‘ The way to beat the enemy is to chew every mouthful of food thirty-two times.’—*Sir Henry Preston at Brighton.*

‘ War is a game in which the winner pays.’—*Lord Handsup at Hall Barn.*

‘ I assert solemnly that the man who, at this critical stage of the war, eats buttered toast, is a traitor to his country.’—*Lord Fittleworth at Ealing.*

‘ Are we downhearted ? YES.’—*Dean Inge everywhere.*

It was an exciting moment when, a little while ago, I found that humbert wolfe had deserted the Muses long enough to get *Quoth the Raven* by heart.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ROUND THE WORLD

*Roving East and Roving West*—Hospitable India—Sir Edwin Lutyens—A Lamb-like joke—The W. G. Grace gates—An enthusiast for de Maupassant—My first American interview—Lecturing for dollars—Sidney Lee—Public Speaking—Dickens and Thackeray dismissed—Squire Bancroft—Mark Twain—A link with Dickens—Conrad in the machine—New York hospitality—A. E. Newton—Harry Elkin—R. B. Adam—Dr. Rosenbach—Gabriel Wells—Charles W. Berry

AT the end of 1919 I embarked on a voyage round the world, afterwards recording some of my impressions in a book entitled *Roving East and Roving West*, which I recently found cited in a second-hand catalogue as *Roving East and Raving West*.

I began in India, staying in Bombay with Lieut.-Colonel Liston, then head of the laboratory for anti-toxins; at Delhi, or rather Raisina or New Delhi, with Sir Edwin Lutyens; in Lucknow with Sir Harcourt Butler, who was then Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; at Benares at the Maharajah's Guest-house, and in Calcutta with the late Sir Charles Kesteven: facts which I mention just to illustrate the honourable conspiracy that exists in our Eastern Empire to prevent English visitors from paying hotel bills.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the extraordinary personality of Sir Edwin Lutyens, that mixture of genius, schoolboy, jester and sage; but I am tempted to quote some verses which I wrote about him at a private dinner-party, at which he was the principal guest, a few years later:

We're here to be jolly, we're here to be fed,  
 But most, for the honour and glory of Ned,  
 Who's sailing this week for the land of the ele-  
 phant, tiger, monsoon, Ranji, curry, and Delhi. . . .

We're sorry to lose him, but know he'll come back,  
 His Patience cards with him (two thirds of the pack)  
 A host of new projects, perhaps a new handle,  
 And many new jokes to hold up to the candle.

There are workers who have to get ready to start,  
 Who must be 'in the mood' for their science or art,  
 With every appliance at hand, and utensil ;  
 But all Neddy needs is six pipes and a pencil.

With these he is happy, insured against all,  
 With these, inspiration is ever at call ;  
 In the street, in the train, during soup, he'll begin it—  
 Your home or your tomb—and it's done in a minute.

He cares not for politics, recks not of guns,  
 'Tis his to make monuments, houses and puns,  
 Far fonder of fun than a glutton of dining,  
 And simplest of creatures, although so 'designing'.

He's always the same, as he draws, or he chaffs,  
 And every one likes him, and every one laughs ;  
 From his fellow R.A.'s and his ministrant Hindoos,  
 To the tortoise who died that his eyes might have  
 windows.

Lutyens carries his nonsense wherever he goes, and I found him just the same at Raisina as at the Garrick Club, with a ceaseless flow of jokes and puns and the ever-ready sheet of paper for pictorial jests as a variation. The Cenotaph in Whitehall, which will preserve his fame when the Viceroy's palace may be in ruins, grew from a drawing dashed off between the courses at dinner. I cannot believe that there was ever a quicker mind than his : the reaction is instantaneous. As for his jokes, tumbling out in such profusion they cannot all be good, but now and then they

are irresistible, as when in a solemn discussion of pundits as to what should be the future of the Crystal Palace, he suggested that it should be preserved in a glass case. Lamb would have liked to say that.

In 1920 Lord Chelmsford was Viceroy, Lord Ronaldshay, now Earl of Zetland, was Governor of Bengal and Lord Willingdon, the present Viceroy, Governor of Madras. I had not seen Lord Willingdon since his cricketing days when he played for Sussex as Freeman-Thomas, and there is no need to say what the conversation was about at one of the lunch-parties to which I was asked, when I add that two of the other guests were the Jam of Nawanagar, whom the gods call Ranji, and Captain, now Major, K. O. Goldie, also a Sussex cricketer.

Talking of cricket, which I am forbearing to do as much as possible, I am proud to say that when Sir Herbert Baker, Lutyens' colleague in the building of the New Delhi, designed the new gates for Lord's as a memorial to W. G. Grace, he took, he tells me, the idea of the sun and the cricket ball from some verses of mine called 'The Cricket Ball Sings', where the lines occur :

' Pour on us torrents of light, good Sun,  
Shine in the hearts of my cricketers, shine ;  
Fill them with gladness and might, good Sun,  
Touch them with glory, O Brother of mine,  
Brother of mine,  
Brother of mine !  
We are the lords of them, Brother and Mate,  
I but a little ball, thou but a great ! '

One of the strangest literary enthusiasts I have met was the Chief Engineer of the boat between Calcutta and Kobe : a cultured version of Captain Kettle, dressed always in the purest white, with manicured hands, who spent his time in reading, re-reading, re-reading again and translating into English, the works of Guy de Maupassant, of which he possessed every edition, plain and coloured, all being at my service. He wanted nothing but this : de Maupassant

to read, to translate and to extol, and Bridge to play. At what hours he visited his engines no one knew.

The pleasures of travel are often lost in regrets. It is interesting and exciting to be in foreign lands : to watch the strange new life pass in procession before one's eyes : to be away from dates and duties ; but the consciousness of the brevity of our span is continually breaking in : the impossibility of seeing all that one would wish or of lingering here and there with a mind at ease. When I was in California, for instance, I felt that I never wanted to leave it : the air was so tonic, the situation so lovely ; I wanted to see Pasadena, I wanted to see Hollywood ; I wanted to re-create the Bret Harte backgrounds. In New York I wanted more of Oliver Herford. But there was no time. There never is time.

It was just inside the Golden Gate that I had my first experience of the American reporter. After making every effort to escape from him—and it is at the end of a voyage and not the beginning that the stowaway's real needs arise—I was run to earth by a young man who had made himself sufficiently familiar with my affairs to know that I was Sir Owen Seaman's deputy as Editor of *Punch* (oddly enough the first time I had occupied his chair was in 1906 when the cartoon I had to propose touched upon the San Francisco earthquake). Knowing of this position on the paper, he began by asking if I had seen the news that Sir Owen was about to resign. This was an invention ; but an ingenious one, for it served to break the ice.

On both my visits to America, in 1920 and in 1925, I had difficulty in making people believe that I had not come to lecture ; not to amass dollars, but to dispense them. That an English author should be treating Tom Tiddler's Ground so cavalierly was incomprehensible. But such is my horror of public appearances that no bribe could lure me on a platform, apart from the fact that I have nothing to say. 'As for having nothing to say,' I was told : 'that doesn't matter. What they want is to see the man in real life.' Well, they didn't. In 1920, Sir Oliver Lodge

and Hugh Walpole were, if I remember rightly, the principal attractions, each far more of an 'eyeful' than myself.

I don't know whether the Americans have a high standard of speaking for British lecturers; but I know that Sidney Lee took lessons in elocution before he went. When he returned he told me that, in Pittsburg on the day on which he was to declaim on Shakespeare, he was staggered to find himself billed on the street cars as 'The Wisest Man on Earth'. The actual words were: 'Come to the So-and-so Lyceum and see and hear Sidney Lee, the Wisest Man on Earth'. But, though staggered, he went through with it.

I remember just before Lee went to America on this lecture tour some one gave him a farewell lunch, and I was telling him that he must try to meet Finlay Peter Dunne, 'Mr. Dooley', because he was at that moment the most remarkable man in that country; and, though mute, he may still be.

'Perhaps', I said, 'he will make you or Shakespeare the subject of an article.'

'Let's send him a cable,' said Beeching: '"Do Lee."'

'And then', said some one else, 'he will reply "Dunne."'

Sidney Lee was the most occupied-with-himself man I ever met, but I did not like him the less for that, nor did it make him less amusing. Rather the reverse. He was not exactly a humorist, but he had a humorous way of glancing at himself, and the circumstance that he did not come heroically out of an incident did not deter him from describing it. Some of his stories, in all of which he himself played a part, were very good. I always like the high-handedness of the speaker, sweeping away two men of genius with a single swift gesture, in the following anecdote. One evening at a party at Leslie Stephen's, said Lee, he was standing chatting with two or three people, when an old Victorian lady, who was very deaf, came up and asked what they were talking about.

'We were discussing Dickens and Thackeray,' said Lee.

'O, were you?' she replied. 'I knew them both. They were both vulgar.'



I think I envy no one so much as the assured speaker in public : not only because it is humiliating to feel shame, but because I often think of things that are not less apt and amusing than those which I have to listen to. I could also, I feel, set a good example by knowing when to sit down, which is rare, and acting on that knowledge, which is rarer. But a public orator I shall never be. Having once, however, had occasion to appear on my feet in a very small gathering and to read a paper which included a rather emotional description of a bull fight, I asked Squire Bancroft to give me a preliminary lesson ; and, after lunch in his room at A1, Albany, he did so. I need not say that it was useless ; for he made it theatrical, and whatever I was going to be, I was not going to be that.

It was then that he showed me the special copy of *The Christmas Carol* which he had had prepared for his public readings of that story : with large type, and wooden covers so constructed that the book always lay open flat. He did not need to refer to it, but he felt safer if it were there.

Good speaking, though Irishmen practise it, is not an English possession. We are too self-conscious. Across the Atlantic, where they are self-conscious too, but in a different way not involving nervousness or a sense of shame, everyone is a ready talker, and the after-dinner speakers can be counted in thousands. It is indeed a point of honour over there to be an after-dinner speaker. The Americans rise with readiness, if not even with alacrity, and carry it off well ; although they are often too long. Even Mark Twain, whom I heard once, seemed to me too long and surprisingly laboured. He had trained his drawl to such a point that it defeated its own ends, and, to the alert listener, gave away what was meant to be a surprise.

Mark Twain was then getting old, and many years of triumphant after-dinner speaking to audiences who in his presence had long lost any critical power, even had they ever possessed any, had blunted his fine edge. America is a country where hero-worshippers and heroine-worshippers

can be very detrimental to their deities, and Mark Twain seemed to me to show many signs of wear.

I have always thought that Bancroft's gift of a thousand pounds to General Booth on the publication of *In Darkest England* was one of the most triumphant events in the Salvation Army's career. To have converted an actor—for that was the corollary of the gift—was to have conquered indeed. And such an actor! I must not be thought to suggest that Bancroft was typical of the less rigid section of his profession; for never could there have been a less tenable proposition. No, it was his eminence that made his support so valuable. As a matter of fact, when General Booth's book, which was actually written by W. T. Stead, came out in 1890, Bancroft had already retired, full of honours, although his knighthood did not come till 1897. He was to appear now and then at a special performance, he was to read *The Christmas Carol*, but he was no longer in the collar. His home was Berkeley Square.

I knew him well: if not well enough to mimic him, well enough to be able to distinguish between the true mimicries and the false. For there are such performers as mimics of mimics, far removed from the original target, and Irving, Tree, Bancroft, Henry Kemble, Harry Higgins and Arnold Bennett are their favourite prey. Bancroft, with all his affectation of worldly sagacity, was a very simple character, incapable of saying anything not true to type. I always think his remark to Tree, when that abundant creature led him across the Haymarket, to get a good view of the façade of His Majesty's Theatre, then nearly completed, was as self-revealing as any he ever made. After surveying the building with the care and deliberation that were customary with him, he delivered the verdict. 'There will be a lot of windows to clean,' he said.

The death of every real personality is an irreparable loss, but Sir Squire Bancroft left a greater void than many a more remarkable man. For one thing, his visibility was good. Right to the end, his passing and re-passing through Piccadilly on the way to or from the Albany, where his

last years were spent, were regular and constant. His fine military-looking figure, as of an aristocratic field-marshal, upright and alert; his grey tall hat with a black band and curly brim, slightly on one side of his massive head, still vigorously covered with white and silky curls; his eyeglass with its broad black ribbon—these were landmarks of the West End. Moreover, his progress was stately, majestic, almost regal. And whoever invented the catch phrase 'Safety First' might have spared his energy so far as Bancroft was concerned, for, at every corner, he paused long enough to be assured that Death, whenever he came, was not coming through a chauffeur.

I never heard Bancroft read *The Christmas Carol*, but, many years ago, in my journalistic days at Brighton, I heard Charles Dickens the younger carry through one of his father's programmes, while Brandram used to give 'Boots at the Hollytree Inn', tuning up his rich varied voice to a piping treble for the two children. Public readings seem to have gone out of favour except in so far as they are encouraged by the B.B.C., where criticism—approval or disapproval—is not registered. I have heard well-known authors reading their works over the wireless—in fact, I have read selections of my own—but it takes two to make a success of such an entertainment, and the reader is alone. Not a sound comes back to him; not a glimpse does he get of any human countenance responding to his efforts. Indeed, for all he knows there may be no transmission in progress at all; it may be a practical joke in the worst of taste. Did anyone listen to me? I had no evidence, nor could I forget that, among the new pleasures of life, that of switching off the wireless can never be underrated.

Naturally I could not have known Dickens, but I was once brought very near him in the most unexpected way. Some years ago I was in the habit of spending week-ends at a house in the country, arriving on Saturday afternoon and leaving on Sunday night. The station was a terminus, with an inn opposite, and, if the pony-cart that came to fetch me was late, I used to cross over to the inn and wait

for it there. On one such Saturday the station-master came over at the same time and I invited him to have a drink. While we sat together he told me—as one who, he understood, was in the literary way himself—that as a boy he had lived at Gad's Hill, where his father had been one of Dickens's gardeners, and he had distinct recollections of the evening parties there and of Dickens leading the dance with the cook as his partner, and afterwards with his own hands mixing a bowl of punch. 'He was a very gay gentleman' was the station-master's considered verdict.

Bancroft and Dickens have taken me a long way from America, whither we must now return, for I want to mention a few things not in my book, *Roving East and Roving West*, which treated only of my first visit. As for instance, that at the Garden City Press, to which I was led by Christopher Morley, I saw Conrad's delicate, scrupulous and reserved work being subjected to the hasty processes of mass production, thousands of copies printed, stitched and bound under my eyes, and then tumbled down chutes for dispatch to bookshops all over the country. For there was a Conrad boom at that moment. 'How many of his buyers will read him?' was the question in my mind, as the machinery clanked away.

Another Long Island expedition which I recall with much pleasure was a visit with John Farrar, who was then a critic but is now a publisher, to lunch with Louis Bromfield, who was then only beginning to be a novelist, but has since written *Twenty-four Hours* and other engrossing revelations of poor human nature at work.

And there were, of course, the usual number of festive evenings in New York. Some of Irving Cobb's nigger anecdotes remain in my memory as the best things of their kind, but even a poor artist in this particular genre can fascinate me.

The best story-teller on either side of the Atlantic that I know is Seymour Hicks, because not only does he narrate with amazing vivacity, but transforms himself, literally in the twinkling of an eye, into everyone concerned, even, for

a second, the humblest bystanders. And his stories have the additional merit of coming as directly from his own experiences as his own mind: odd occurrences which a less observant eye and brain would overlook but which he transmutes into living comedy. Rarely can a day pass without such an incident happening: adventures to the adventurous; humours to the humorist.

No pen could begin to do justice to this galvanic personality—certainly not mine and, up to the present time, not his, for his books about himself and the stage lack the spark. But why, with such a tongue as that, should he want to write? Lamb said, when extolling the comedians of his own day, that the genius of actors, mimics, raconteurs has, after their death, to be taken on hearsay: it can no longer be proved. This was true at that time, but is less true now when the talking film has been invented to reproduce the tones, gestures and mannerisms of the theatre. Some day perhaps it will attempt more intimate records, and then the delight of hearing Seymour Hicks telling a story to a few friends may be shared by all the world: a suggestion to Elstree.

If I were asked to name my most vivid impressions of America—or the most cherished souvenirs of the inward eye—I should say the blue Vermeer in the Metropolitan Museum, the Lincoln Memorial at Washington and the fireflies in a garden on a hill above the Hudson River.

Locker-Lampson's steel room at Rowfant was the first I ever saw. The next steel room that was unlocked for me was A. E. Newton's at Daylesford, Pennsylvania. I was pleased again to find, quite recently, Andrew Lang's poem upon the Rowfant treasures which are now—where? As they went to America, some may actually be at Daylesford. Naturally Lang, who was a great fisherman, was pleased with the copy of *The Compleat Angler*:

' Fair first editions, duly prized,  
Above them all, methinks, I rate  
The tome where Walton's hand revised  
Its wonderful receipts for bait.

Happy, who rich in toys like these  
Forgets a weary nation's ills ;  
Who from his study window sees  
The circle of the Sussex hills !'

and happy also Mr. Newton, whose study windows give on a Pennsylvania prospect hardly less pleasing.

Newton's attitude to books is different from that of many collectors, for he reads them. Was it not Locker-Lampson himself, either in *Patchwork* or *My Confidences*, who first told the story of the aggrieved bookbinder of first editions ? The owner had complained of the difficulty in opening one of his products. 'Why, you must have been a-reading of it, sir,' he replied. But Newton does more than read them ; he talks about them, and writes about them, and wants his enthusiasm to be shared. And he writes so well as to be a danger to those whose livelihood is the pen. His familiarity with Boswell has even given him a Johnsonian air : he lays down the law, not, it is true, in the Doctor's Latinized periods but in the American vernacular, yet with much the same dogmatism ; and as he approaches every subject on his own feet, disdaining a lift, he is always interesting, even when wrong.

It was Newton also who introduced me, in Philadelphia, to Miss Repplier. I mean in person, for I had long known her in print. It is my belief that America has never had—and certainly has not at this time—an acuter mind than hers or a more distinguished or juster critic of life.

Wandering about Philadelphia, which has much that is old and restful as well as the offices of the *Saturday Evening Post*, I chanced, in Clarke Park, upon a piece of statuary which made me rub my eyes—not for the usual reason, for it was simple and charming, but because it seemed out of place. I refer to Edwin Elwell's group representing Dickens and Little Nell, which is reproduced somewhere in this volume. Many of the most devoted admirers of Dickens are over there, in spite of *American Notes*, but it was odd to find in Philadelphia a more tender tribute to the great man than I had ever seen in his own country.

Since then, however—in fact, only the other day—a statue representing ‘a foolish image blowing a dry shell’ was erected in the New Kent Road, London, by the Dickens Fellowship, in commemoration of David Copperfield’s rest, near the spot, on his walk to Dover.

Although Dr. Johnson, William Blake, and Lamb are Newton’s principal darlings, he throws a net wide enough to encompass first editions of Trollope in three volumes each. These, however, are not lapped in steel but can be handled freely on the outer shelves. It was Newton, when we met on a steamer between Marseilles and Port Said, who forced me to take Trollope more seriously than I had yet done; and I am grateful to him, although I shall never be sealed of the inner clan.

But, for Dr. Johnson, Daylesford is not the hub of the universe. The finest collection of Johnsoniana is that of R. B. Adam at Buffalo, who talks little but knows all. I had a great day with Mr. Adam in 1925: in his library in the morning and evening, and to Niagara Falls in the afternoon. Since then he has sent me his really marvellous catalogue, in one of the three volumes of which I came, to my astonishment, upon my own portrait, its title to inclusion being my authorship of a *Life of Lamb*, since there are two letters of Lamb’s, and one of Mary Lamb’s to Sarah Stoddart, in the Buffalo collection.

While we are on the subject of collectors and their catalogues I must be permitted the boast that the leading English collector of our time, Thomas J. Wise, invited me to write the Introduction to Volume V of the Ashley Library Catalogue. ‘It will be your title to immortality,’ he said. Mr. Wise is one of the most enviable of men. Like Edward Lear in his rhymed autobiography:

‘He sits in a beautiful parlour  
With hundreds of books on the wall;’

but they are not hundreds, they are thousands; and they are not ordinary books, they are first editions or special editions and many of them are priceless manuscripts. Let

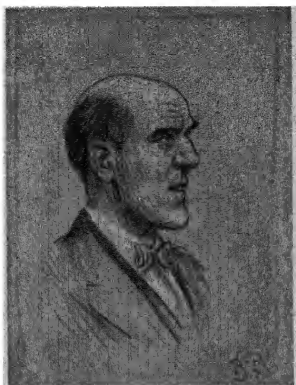


THE AUTHOR OF "THE WATER GIPSIES"

(A. P. HERBERT)

From a pencil sketch by Sir Bernard Partridge





FRANK REYNOLDS



GEORGE MORROW

T. ANSTEY GUTHRIE

SKETCHES BY SIR BERNARD PARTRIDGE

me quote a few sentences about Mr. Wise from my diploma work for Valhalla :

‘ With so slight an acquaintance with bibliolatriy, I may be thought to have an inadequate claim to say anything worth hearing about Mr. Wise’s Hampstead treasury of delight. I will not therefore try ; but instead will please myself by concentrating on Mr. Wise himself, and saying that he is the best of men. There exist collectors whose proprietary sense can be hypertrophied ; whose addiction to such bulldog-breed slogans as “ What I have I hold ” is over-developed ; who buy unpublished correspondence in order to keep it unpublished ; who—perhaps for perfectly sound reasons—are too busy to see strangers, or even to reply to letters. Mr. Wise is also an occupied man—he has his business to attend to as well as his hobby—but I will defy anyone who is preparing a new book which might be improved by something in Mr. Wise’s possession (and he has practically everything !) to ask for the use of that something in vain.

And although other book-collectors may be as kind, I will defy any book-collector in the world to be kinder. When displaying his library, Mr. Wise is more than a collector, a scholar and a host : he is a brother. I cannot too much praise his enthusiasm (but never to the disconcerting point of a challenge) over this priceless object ; his patience as you tarry over that ; his modesty when you express your astonished pleasure (as you are continually doing) at the exquisite appropriateness of this binding or the concise erudition of that prefatory provenancial note. In a word, Mr. Wise is not only one of the first living friends of books, but also of bookmen.’

Newton’s collection was not the only one I saw in Philadelphia. I had a long evening with Mr. William M. Elkins, looking at his Goldsmiths, in which he then specialized, and a remarkable copy of *Pickwick* ; from time to time paying attention to an ancient bottle of Bourbon from another part of the mansion. Before dinner I had drunk my first mint julep. And I spent a long time in Mr. Widener’s picture gallery, with Rembrandt and Vermeer, and was a guest

at the Rosenbachs' establishment in Chestnut Street, where you can buy fancy articles on the ground floor and first folios on the third. Dr. Rosenbach is more than a dealer in books; he is a bibliophile too and there are treasures in his safes which I am certain he will never bring himself to part from. Those few pages of the manuscript of *Pickwick*, for instance, the only vestiges of it that are known—he will never sell those. 'Their worth couldn't be appraised,' he told me.

The Doctor, or Rosie as he is called, has a take-it-or-leave-it air which is very uncommon in his calling, and I can never believe that, with all his business acumen, business is anything but secondary with him. Life and sea-fishing come first. Even such literary efforts as he, from time to time, has made, are on the humane side, the latest being a study of Benjamin Franklin, whose gallantries persisted to old age, as the 'all-embracing'.

Gabriel Wells, the Doctor's chief rival as a despoiler of English libraries, or snapper-up, at Sotheby's, of well-considered trifles, has also a very definite private existence; but whereas the Doctor, when he takes up the pen (or, as I should guess, dictates to a typist), chooses the romantic paths of bibliolatry, Gabriel Wells is paternally and judicially concerned with the world at large. When he is in London his passion for writing to the *Times* is not exceeded by that of any retired English colonel. I always feel that any defect in the workings of the League of Nations may be due to the nervousness felt at Geneva under Gabriel's vigilant gaze.

As a customer I have had nothing to do with either of these great book-dealers, for collecting has never been among my manias. I prefer the last edition to the first. Nor am I what is called a collector's author, having written either not well enough, or too copiously, or both. It is, however, my pride to have been collected by one amateur who, I believe, has a copy of every publication, no matter how obscure, with which I have had anything to do. This is Charles W. Berry of Pickering Place, St. James's Street, and as he also knows what is best in wine, I consider that the

pride that I feel is justified. And I am not therefore among those who

‘wonder what the vintners buy  
One half so precious as the stuff they sell’.

I know.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *PUNCH*

'The Mahogany Tree'—Tenniel—George du Maurier—F. C. Burnand—Owen Seaman—F. Anstey—A. A. Milne—Frank Reynolds—Algernon Locker—Puns—'Evoc' and 'A. P. H.'—A parody of Hardy—George Morrow—R. C. Lehmann and H. W. Lucy—Linley Sambourne—Saint Walter—Outside contributors—A specimen article—Big hitting—A cricket quatrain—A centenarian poetess

THE invitation to join the *Punch* table reached me when I was in Brussels in the autumn of 1903, and I made it the excuse for a very good dinner at the Helder, which was then the best of the little exclusive restaurants in the Hôtel de Ville district. Its place to-day has been taken by Cordemans. My first appearance at the Mahogany Tree, as Thackeray called the *Punch* table—though it actually is of deal and not round but oblong, with curved ends—was on January 6, 1904, armed with a knife given me by St. Loe Strachey with which, some day, to carve my initials. The chair was that occupied before me by Phil May, whom I was immediately succeeding, another writer being at that moment more needed on the staff than another artist. My place was between Sir William Agnew and Bernard, now Sir Bernard, Partridge, who is still my neighbour, but Philip Agnew has succeeded his father. The others present were Sir Frank Burnand, the editor, Linley Sambourne, who had followed Tenniel as chief cartoonist, Raven Hill, C. L. Graves, R. C. Lehmann, Owen Seaman, Philip Agnew, Laurence Bradbury, E. T. Reed, H. W. Lucy and Anstey Guthrie. Round the room was a frieze of portraits of the staff from the earliest day, in 1841, when Mark Lemon launched the paper ; on the mantelpiece

were Boehm's statuettes of Thackeray and Leech ; and on the walls were a selection of the best known cartoons and other drawings, dominated, I hardly need say, by Tenniel.

This famous commentator on Victorian history was still living in retirement and was regularly visited by members of the staff. When Mrs. Philip Agnew took me one afternoon to pay my respect, I found him the soul of old-fashioned courtesy, upright of carriage for all his eighty years, very gentle but nearly blind.

The *Punch* staff ate at 10, Bouverie Street, on the site of the present building, opened in 1930. To occupy Phil May's chair was as near as I ever came to that wayward and endearing man of genius, but one evening he had been pointed out to me at the London Pavilion, and, once seen, his flaming features were never forgotten. Weakness, sweetness and fancy were equally expressed there. I could not gather that Phil had brought to the weekly dinner much political sagacity. But then, according to report, neither had George du Maurier, who, I learned, had been in the habit, directly the discussion set in, of drawing up another chair for his legs, placing a handkerchief over his face and going to sleep. He woke up once with a start and inquired if the company were still talking about Gladstone and Disraeli, and on hearing that that was the dismal truth, ' Good heavens ! ' he exclaimed, ' why don't you talk about something sensible ? Why don't you talk about the beauty of women ? ' and again passed into oblivion.

I had met Burnand once before—at a dinner which he gave in order to pass the rule over me—when I astonished him by my familiarity not only with *Happy Thoughts* but with his less known burlesques and that masterpiece of nonsense about the Paris Exhibition which is included in *Out of Town*. The statement may have a paradoxical sound, but if *Happy Thoughts* had been taken more seriously by its author it might, without losing any of its fun, be one of the great psychological works of the world. Burnand did not know how good his material was ; he played with it and dropped it all too soon. As an editor he had begun

to take things equally easily, so much so that Mr. Punch, had it not been for his artists, might have seriously suffered ; but as a jovial head of the table Burnand could not have been better, and as chairman of a committee met for the selection of the two cartoons, into which at a given hour the regular weekly meal merges, he was admirable. No simple task, for professional humorists can be garrulous and deviate from the point ; but Burnand, while letting everyone have his say, pounced suddenly on the salient idea and quickly fixed the picture. Sir Owen Seaman, who succeeded him, was less swift in his decisions, but in the end no less effective ; and as a literary editor he far surpassed Burnand.

Of these men, whom I was to meet every week for many years—and several of whom I still meet every week, but no longer at dinner, for the meal has been changed to lunch—I already knew only three or four : Graves, of course, and Seaman, whose mastery of the technique of rhyme and rhythm, apart altogether from his wit, had long been my despair, as it must be the despair of all writers of light verse. And I had seen Partridge on the stage, where he was known as Bernard Gould, in *Arms and the Man* and *Sweet Lavender*. But to find myself in the same room with the author of *Vice Versâ* was really thrilling, and not only *Vice Versâ* but *The Pariah* and *The Tinted Venus* and *Burglar Bill* and *Voces Populi* and *Lyre and Lancet* and *The Man from Blankley's*. That such a body of fun, ingenuity and satirical observation should have come from this quiet and retiring personality was a surprise. The only person that I ever met who had a blind spot for *Vice Versâ* was Lord Balfour. When, quite late in his life, he told me that he had never read it, I hastened to send him a copy. After a week or two he wrote to thank me, but said it had left him cold.

During nearly thirty years at the *Punch* table I have seen many changes. Old colleagues passed and new colleagues came in : notably A. A. Milne, to succeed Owen Seaman as assistant editor after Burnand's retirement, and himself, after the War, to retire and make a new reputation as a dramatist and children's poet. Not since its foundation in

1841 has *Punch*, in my opinion, printed articles of such unwavering high spirits, fun and felicity of phrase as those signed 'A. A. M.' A new kind of nonsense was his, based upon and blended with the facts of life, never permitting an intruding qualm, and all carried out with apparently effortless ease and the utmost gaiety. The art that conceals art. Anyone sitting down to the portmanteau volume *Those were the Days*, in which his weekly articles are collected, must agree with me. Portions of *When We Were Very Young* appeared in *Punch* too, but long after his retirement.

Milne's collaborator with the pencil, Ernest Shepard, notable for the charm of his fantasies, joined the staff in 1921 and is a regular contributor; Frank Reynolds, the faithful portrayer of the suburban householder, the golfer in difficulties and the cricketer in distress, joined in 1919, succeeding, as art editor, F. J. Townsend, who died suddenly in 1920.

It was by a symmetrical chance that in 1915 I was able to introduce Algernon Locker, my first journalistic befriender in the eighteen-eighties, and my editor at the *Globe*, as successor to Milne. He became of the greatest service to the paper, both in his ordinary work and as a remembrancer, and his death in 1930 was much lamented. After succeeding to the assistant editorship, he became in 1916 the new Toby M.P. when Sir Henry Lucy, who died in 1924, gave up. It was a pity, I always used to think, that Locker and Burnand could not have been there together to match their wits in the art of playing upon words, for both were proficient. The punning tradition was at its highest, I suppose, with Hood, and, working through H. J. Byron and George R. Sims, assisted by the Hon. Hugh Rowley's dreadful books *Puniana* and *More Puniana*, culminated in Burnand. Locker was rarely allowed to exercise his gifts in this way in the paper, but in conversation he bubbled with puns. Two or three examples occur to me as I write: as when someone at a restaurant lunch remarked that the sardines were rather poor, and he replied



that that was obvious, since they had the bay-leaves in ; and again, when the statement was recklessly made that there were no eminences in Belgium, he instanced as a refutation, not the Ardennes, as you or I would have done, but Cardinal Mercier. On Locker's retirement, Graves became assistant editor.

Two of the brightest jewels in Mr. Punch's present crown, E. V. Knox ('Evoe'), and Alan Herbert, joined during my time, 'Evoe' in 1920 and 'A. P. H.' in 1924, each bringing some of the divine scorn or anger with which all the best satirists are endowed. A. P. H. indeed, one skin down, is pure reformer ; while 'Evoe', whose mordant brilliance both in prose and verse is one of the most remarkable features of *Punch* to-day, and whose physiognomical formation is so like that of the busts of Voltaire, has serious depths which it is wise not to stir. Owen Seaman having latterly directed his Muse chiefly towards events of the week, upon which she turns a steady and sometimes withering gaze, it has been left to 'Evoe' to keep burning the pure flame of parody, and he has been signally successful. The following masterly capture of Thomas Hardy's matter-of-fact narrative method and sense of doom I have always treasured as being, if not the best, at any rate my favourite, among Knox's wicked efforts. It runs thus :

#### THE RENCONTRE

A forward dash by a shape of gloom,  
 And the train just caught, not missed,  
 And there in my carriage the woman whom  
 I had promised to clasp by a yew-spread tomb  
 On that very night ; but I had been false to the tryst.

I had thought to leave her standing alone  
 In the spectred shadows' chill,  
 To listen there to the wind's sharp moan  
 While I journeyed to meet with a different one  
 Whom I loved in the city streets far off from the vill.

What then was she doing seated here,  
Not glimmering under the trees  
Where many a night we'd had much cheer  
In Summer's cyme<sup>1</sup> or in Winter's drear  
Reading the headstones' carved epitomes?

Did she too, tiring of this our love,  
Speed now to a different man?  
I pondered deep, and the thought thereof  
Rang loud as a church bell toll above  
The long roar of the train as it smoked and ran.

My assignation at least was spoiled,  
But what were better to do  
In a mesh of circumstance thus coiled?  
Speak or be silent? So I boiled  
As, glowering out of our corners, sat we two.

Then she with a laugh: 'You are overlate  
For the lych-gate steps this eve.'  
And I: 'Yet you will not have to wait,  
For there overbeetles us both a fate  
Beyond our power of escapement, I believe.'

Then silence again and no relief,  
As when in a prison ward  
Thief is upmewed with a fellow thief,  
Both traitors, till I was well-nigh lief  
To pull down the communication cord.

She looked no more at me, nor I at her,  
But out at the rayed rain,  
As if we were chance companions there,  
Watching the phasmal stations glare  
And the ghost woods leap at us and sink again,

Till now, the city's commotion reached at last,  
We saw in the platform smother,  
Amidst the elbowers as they passed,  
Two forms that were side by side, and cast  
Glad look from gleeful eyes each one at other.

<sup>1</sup> Height or zenith, understand,

'My Lover!' then said that woman, 'whom I went  
To meet here on this night.'

And I: 'Mine too! With this event,  
Chance-wise on-brought, there is surely blent

Much Irony, but more of Pity's sprite.'

She answered: 'Think you that these two lovers

Are worth our bosoms' rack,

That we for their sakes should be rovers?'

What was the upshot? Well, this discovers.

In amity we caught the next train back.

My only quarrel with Knox, who is Mr. Punch's new Editor, is that he took the pseudonym 'Evøe': one result being that my letter-box is congested with missives from readers who, confusing 'Evøe' with 'E.V.L.', thank him for the pleasure which his articles have given them: very tedious perusing for me.

George Morrow, my old friend and often predominant partner, joined the Table in 1922, after having long been adding his sly and stealthy humour to the pages of the paper. That one man can have as many comic thoughts as George is a wonder of the world.

With a team so differently composed, the Editor's task, when the time comes to discuss the cartoons, is not too easy, especially as politically as well as temperamentally we are not all alike. The greater the honour to him for guiding Mr. Punch's hand to hit the nail so often on the head. Tradition has laid it down that cartoonists never speak, except to protest when an idea is not drawable; strong, silent men, they merely receive their instructions. Tenniel is not known ever to have uttered a word, and Bernard Partridge confines himself to practical points. But Raven Hill knows every move of the political game and wishes his knowledge shared. Partridge is interested in many things besides his work. It was he who showed me this prose prevision of the metre of *In Memoriam* and example of accidental verse, in a work by Whewell: 'There is no force, however great, can strain a cord, however fine, into a horizontal line that shall be absolutely straight.'

Of the members of the Staff when I joined on that evening in 1904, five are still active : Seaman, Graves, Partridge, Raven Hill and Phil Agnew, our host. Sir William Agnew died in 1911 and we thus lost a very kindly entertainer and admirable mixer of salads. E. T. Reed died the other day. Laurence Bradbury rarely comes to the lunches now, and Anstey Guthrie has long since retired. When Rudie Lehmann, after an illness lasting for some years, died in 1929, the world was the poorer by the loss of one of the most generous and warm-hearted men I ever met. With that warm heart went an irascible tongue from which we all now and then suffered, but the healing minute was never far distant. Sir Henry Lucy was a very different character, having no fire and much caution. In his own domain, in the gallery and lobby of the House of Commons, he was supreme, with his neat descriptive gift and power of summary and his deadly instinct for the use of the spotlight. The enormous fortune, which, to everyone's surprise, he left—largely to be devoted to charities—has been a handicap from which we all still suffer, for since then the assumption has been that every member of the staff is equally blest.

Of all the *Punch* men that I have known, Linley Sambourne, who died in 1910, was the most idiosyncratic. A few passages from the official éloge which it fell on me to write may perhaps be quoted here :

‘ He was both our greatest pride and our greatest pleasure. His genius as an artist was, of course, our pride. But to this he added as a cartoonist and weekly adviser the pictorial vision in its most highly developed form, seeing in pictures where most of us saw only in words or ideas, and knowing instantly not only what could be done, but—more important perhaps—what could not be done, while he had also an astounding memory of the public events of his own lifetime, with no little knowledge of universal history and a vast store of out-of-the-way information, all of which was exact. Others of us could remember that Tenniel, say, had once used a certain fable in a cartoon, but it was Sammy who would remark, “ If you turn to March, 1863, you will find it.” Others might fancy that they knew what, say, a

German forage cap was like ; it was Sammy who, with a few strokes of his pencil, set it down accurately for the guidance of the junior cartoonist. For he was the kindest of helpers : the fruit of years of the closest observation was at the disposal of any who asked him, conveyed usually in cheery little notes addressed in two inks, red and black, often with a design around the stamp and usually containing some diverting drawing within.

These, then, were our pride—this masterly hand, this treasury of fact, this vivid fancy, this creative eye, this generosity of mind. And our pleasure ? The Sammy of our delight was inimitable, unique, a creature of drollery and mischief, shrewd yet naïve, good talker, good listener, and most admirable laugh. And Sammy was our delight no less because he was himself something of a butt. Next to making a joke himself, which he always signalled by an upward wave of his hand, he enjoyed a joke against himself. Age could not wither nor custom stale the body of myth which had gathered about him during his nine-and-thirty years at the Table ; and every time any of these legends were re-told—that one, for example, of his boasted friendship with an imaginary warrior, “ General Stores ”—every time these ancient fables were re-told, always with new apocryphal garnish, Sammy was the most delighted listener. In the grip of laughter his eyes danced, glistened and disappeared.

Best of his own jokes were his curious malapropisms, whether consciously artificial or unconsciously blurted, no one quite knows. But that they were genuine we shall all of us continue to hope. “ It was so still you could have picked up a pin,” is an excellent example ; and again, “ He hadn’t a rag to stand upon ” ; and again, of a burden under which some public personage was suffering, “ It’s a White Elephant round the man’s neck ”—surely the finest compound image of embarrassment ever imagined !

None of the photographs do Sammy justice, for they omit animation. His expression was capable of extreme vivacity and his eyes were quick and bright. In repose his face latterly was worn and tired ; but once you got him interested he was, almost to the end, instantly gay and spirited once more. Nor do the portraits bring out a curious

likeness to Sir Walter Scott which had been increasing in late years. Not only was the conformation of his head akin, but at his place at the Table, with a window at his side and back, the light, on summer Wednesdays, before the blinds were drawn, used to touch his silvered hair with a radiance such as more than one painting of Scott exhibits.'

(Re-reading this reference to Sir Walter I am reminded of a discovery of my own concerning that great man which, although it has been recorded elsewhere, I should like to repeat here. One day walking along Princes Street in Edinburgh, I noticed that there is a point where the head of Sir Walter in the Scott Memorial is in a line with the clock of the Midland Hotel, the upper part of which forms a perfect and proper halo).

Sambourne's genius with the pencil is becoming more and more recognized, and in a Dutch survey of English black and white art which was published two or three years ago he was definitely placed as our greatest exponent : above even Keene, who would be my choice. As a matter of fact no true comparison lies, for Keene was an impressionist and Sammy an adherent to classic traditions. The one dashed off his transcripts of life and nature ; the other built up a finished pattern, fanciful and beautiful, yet solid as a cathedral. Phil May said of him, ' All that I know as an artist I learned from Sambourne '.

Rudie, Lucy, Sammy—these died of mature age ; but it was in his eager chivalrous youth that Ewan Agnew was stricken down, just as he was on the threshold of what must have been a fine humane career, stimulating to the family Paper and useful to the world. He had everything on his side : a handsome presence, charm, wide sympathies, enough literary and dramatic ability to have put a novel or two and a play or two to his name ; but I think of him more as a Crusader in the real use of the term. He had but recently joined the Table when in 1930, at the age of thirty-six, by the inscrutable decree of Fate, so wasteful of the best, his life was ended.

I am confining my remarks to those *Punch* writers and

artists who are 'on the Table', as membership of the inner staff is called. Many others who have helped to make the paper what it is, year in, year out, could be mentioned; but, not being of the Mahogany Tree fraternity, they do not come within this survey, nor do I know all of them personally. Walter Emanuel, although he established the 'Charivaria' tradition, was not on the Table and I met him only once: a typical dark Hebrew, a lawyer by profession, behind whose glasses were a pair of eyes that swam with impish mirth. 'Charivaria' is now provided by several contributors.

Most of my work for *Punch* which was not completely ephemeral has been collected in various volumes, but naturally the greater part remains in the paper. One little uncollected article in the early nineteen-twenties I recently alighted upon which I should like to quote here:

#### 'HERO-WORSHIP'

It was my privilege not long since to receive a letter from a famous cricketer whose active career, alas! is behind him, for illness has stolen away his strength, but he still watches the game with a jealous eye and rejoices in the triumphs of others. In spite of all the prowess of the last few years, the new names and the great scores, no one has arisen to take his place. Personally I should not be surprised if none ever did.

Seeing in the mind's eye (as I finished reading his brief missive) a vision of little running boys with autograph-books on the grass of the Oval and Lord's, through whose masses the retiring players have to force their way—few as complaisant as they used to be—I put it into an envelope and addressed it to a small nephew at school. Not that I wanted him to be fired to join this importunate army, with its pencils and its albums and its insensitiveness to rebuffs, but I wished to behave like a decent uncle and provide him with a unique and perhaps coveted possession.

I say "perhaps", because this cricketer has not played for so long that there was the possibility that neither my nephew nor any of his companions—it is a school for really

little boys—had heard of him. Their heads might be so full of contemporary giants—the Hearnés and the Hitches, the Jupps and the Jeacockes, the Meads and the—no, not Persians, Australians—that this Emeritus Titan, the delight of our eyes a decade ago, might be history so ancient as to be negligible.

But I was wrong.

“The letter you sent to Gerry”, his fond mother wrote, “was a most tremendous success. He thought it was his duty, poor public-spirited mite, to put it up for auction for some school fund or other, and it fetched four-and-tenpence. But that isn’t all. Each of the eleven took a tracing of it.”

I hope Mr. Jessop is a reader of *Punch*.’

And so we come to an end.

In a busy literary life there must be a certain amount of drudgery ; occasions arise when it is difficult to provide the promised article and one’s pen grates on the paper. If the testimony of my writing friends as to their own experiences is to be believed, I have suffered in this way less than they ; but suffered I have. On the other hand, there are moments when one has done something, slight enough may be, the pleasure in the making of which is exceedingly tonic. Since we are at the end let me say that the whole mass of writing of which I am guilty—and a recent article in an American magazine informed me that the pages in the British Museum Catalogue given to my excesses amount to thirty-three—can be forgotten, so long as someone will bear in mind two brief achievements in which I was involved. One of these is the quatrain I wrote at the request of the late Philip Norman for his history of the Eton Ramblers’ Cricket Club. In a letter from him in August, 1928, he said, ‘I am now the oldest living member of the Eton Ramblers’ Cricket Club, and, urged by Lord Harris, I have written an account of its origin and the first eighteen years of its existence, rather in the style of the book on West Kent cricket, though I had not the help of Aislabie and Herbert Jenner. I have annotated it freely, putting in a few rhymes and notes on most of the players. Now I



come to the gist of my letter. Can you and will you write me a couplet, or, better, four lines, on a mighty swiper, at cricket, not any one in particular? I should insert them after my note on "Buns" Thornton, a rough copy of which I enclose. But I do not want it to be on him specially; you can refer to others, if you like to Bonnor, the finest specimen of humanity I remember, or to Jessop, who mowed all the good balls away with such skill and dexterity. All I want is that it should be unadulterated eulogy, and that you should let me put in your initials at the end.'

That is the kind of request it is a pleasure to receive, and here are the four lines which, after many hours of thought both in the day and night, I submitted:

" "You must keep them on the carpet," is the counsel of the pro'.

"And don't you leave your ground," he adds; and all agree 'tis so.

Yet even from the pedant, what a deep ecstatic sigh  
When the batsman jumps to meet one and a sixer climbs  
the sky!'

That is one side line of which I am proud. The other is far more remarkable, not for my own work but for its sequel. On Good Friday, 1928, the day on which my honoured friend Lady Noble, widow of Sir Andrew Noble the ship-builder, reached the age of a hundred years, I sent her the following telegram; and why it is a telegram and not a letter is explained at the end:

'Dear Lady Noble, may I add a voice to those that praise, in tones with pride to joy allied, your wondrous length of days? When people talk of vintage years, I say there's no debate: no year they name can have such fame as 1828. For in that year Dame Nature grew her very choicest wine: "A gift", said she, "to cross the sea: St. Lawrence to the Tyne." Dear Lady Noble, may you live, enshrined in care and love, as long as you desire to do and then resume above. You must not answer me in rhyme, although you rhyme so well; I would not strain that precious brain. Your servant E.V.L. P.S.—I had to telegraph, because,

you see, you chose to hold your fête upon a date when post-men seek repose.'

I do not claim much merit for these verses. They are such as any literary man might, if he had the privilege of such an acquaintance, send. Centenarians have been thus felicitated before and will be again. But the shining peculiarity of the incident is that it is probably the only occasion on which the centenarian has replied in kind. By return of post came Lady Noble's acknowledgment :

'In days of yore 'twas deemed a shame  
A lady's date or age to name,  
But this distinction now I claim  
My only path to future fame.

The gifts and graces of the mind,  
Attributed by friends so kind,  
In me—alas!—I fail to find ;  
But thank you all, sweet souls so blind.

At lengthened years I can't rebel,  
Because of them I have to tell  
Tributes my vanity to swell,  
And witty rhymes from E.V.L.'



SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF E. V. LUCAS.

Men talk like books; but how few write like men!  
Therefore, though stilled his voice, abides his pen  
Bemerton's over Methuen's shall endure  
And reader's pleasure after listener's cure.

AN EPITAPH

By G. K. Chesterton

## APPENDIX

ANSWERS to the examination paper on 'The Essays of Elia',  
in the *Cornhill Magazine*, January, 1911.

1. Answer. 'Thank God we are safe.'
2. Answers. (a) It put him beside his tenor.  
(b) Apple-dumplings.
3. Answer. He pinched his cat's ears extremely.
4. Answer. To be strong-backed and neat-bound.
5. Answer. He condescended to be the taster.
6. Answer. An Oratorio.
7. Answer. Four Scotsmen. Burns. He was dead.
8. Answer. Thomas Tame's.
9. Answer. James Kenney. Margaret of Newcastle's Letters.
10. Answers. (a) 'Woman, you are superannuated.'  
(b) Because he lived at the Mint.
11. Answer. Of Mrs. Conrady's. A nose.
12. Answer. He says he had.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**M**Y thanks are due and are warmly offered to many people for their kindness in assisting in the illustration of this book. First of all, to George Morrow for allowing so much of his work to be used, and thus to make it infinitely more entertaining; to Bernard Partridge for giving me the run of his sketch-books; and to the proprietors of *Punch* for allowing me to reprint some of Mr. Punch's Personalities.

For permission to use various other portraits in the book, I am grateful to Miss Ker, to Mrs. Samuel Drewett, to Mr. Percy Dobell, to Mr. Muirhead Bone, to the Hon. Neville Lytton, to Mr. J. Kerr Lawson, to Millicent, Lady Moore, to Mr. A. A. Milne, to Mr. Ernest Shepard, to Mrs. William Bateson, to Mrs. Leonard Rees, to Mr. William Nicholson, to Mr. George Belcher, A.R.A., to Messrs. John Lane, to Sir Owen Seaman, to Lieut.-Colonel Archer, and Mr. Stanley Unwin, and to Sir James Irvine.

And very specially I have to thank my old friend and collaborator, C. L. Graves, for allowing me to enrich this book by many passages from our joint products of shilling nonsense. Although the partnership which produced them was a close one, students of style will (I fear) detect the hand of Graves more often than my own; and this circumstance makes my gratitude the deeper.

I am indebted also to Mr. de V. Payen-Payne and to Dr. C. E. Wheeler for reading the proofs.

E. V. L.

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